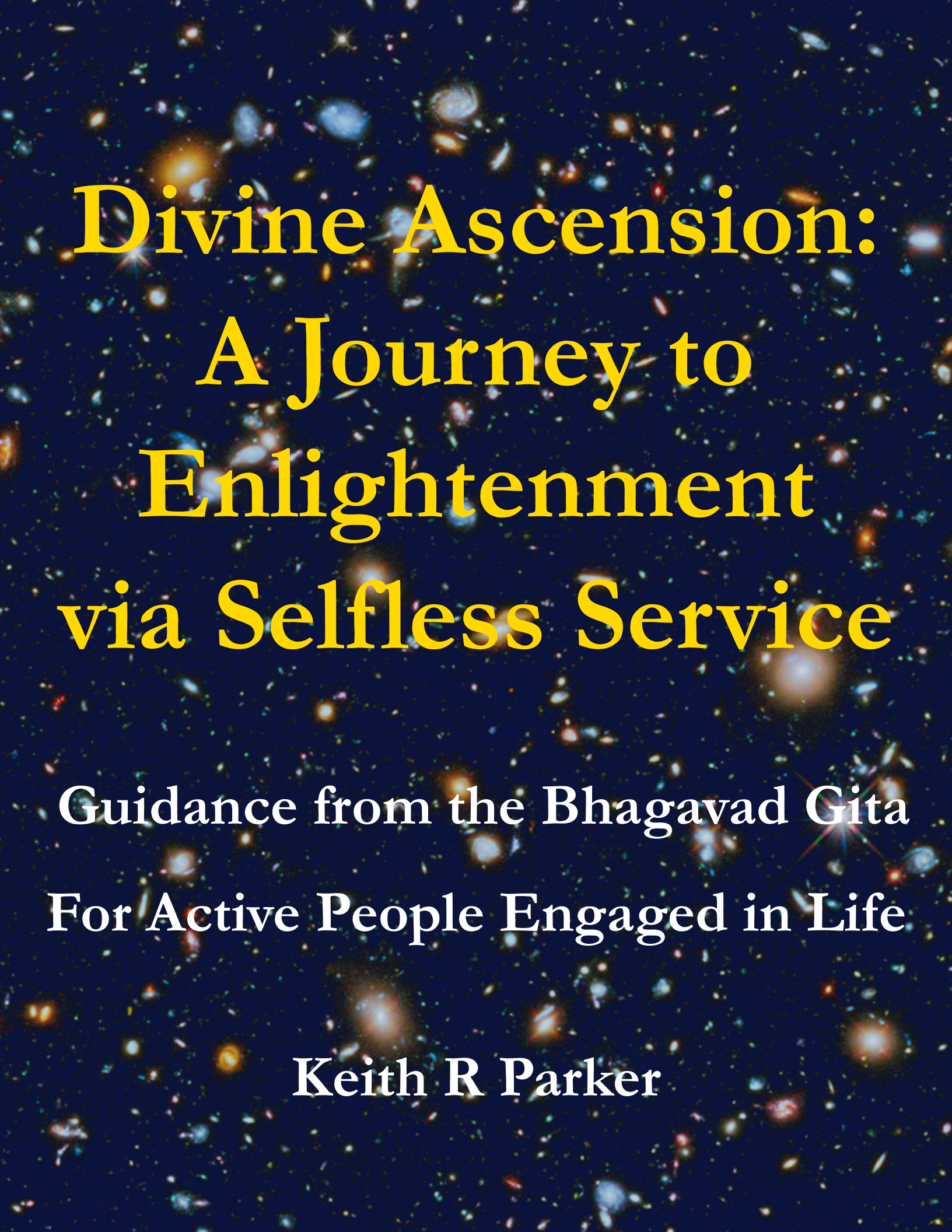


The background of the entire image is a deep blue space filled with numerous galaxies, stars, and nebulae in various colors including yellow, orange, red, and blue, creating a cosmic and ethereal atmosphere.

Divine Ascension: A Journey to Enlightenment via Selfless Service

Guidance from the Bhagavad Gita
For Active People Engaged in Life

Keith R Parker

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A Journey to Enlightenment
via Selfless Service

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For Active People Engaged in Life

By Keith R Parker

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Cover: Brazilian graphics designer Samara Battisti weds NASA's image of deep Cosmos with unbounded Consciousness.

GALATIANS 5:13

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom in sinful selfish acts; rather serve one another in selfless acts of love.”

John Keats

"Wherein lies happiness? in that which beckons
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence; till we shine,
Full alchemized, and free of space. Behold
The clear religion of heaven!"

Where would I be?

To Reny for love and unflinching support and my old friend William for critical turns. Thank you.

Acknowledgement

Winthrop Sargeant's *The Bhagavad Gita: Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition* word-by-word translation inspired me to transcend text and grammar, and follow my own path to write commentaries rooted in ancient Vedic teachings and my evolving experiences.

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Introduction

Divine Ascension: A Journey to Enlightenment via Selfless Service is an eye-opening exploration offering a fresh perspective on the practice of Karma Yoga, diverging from traditional interpretations that often advocate for a path characterized by resistance of desires, restraint of actions and deliberate indifference to outcomes. Instead, this transformative work invites readers to engage dynamically with the world through selfless service to others' desires, positing that true spiritual growth and fulfillment of one's divine potential are not achieved through withdrawal from the world but through active participation in it.

I argue that by placing the needs and desires of others at the forefront of our actions, we align ourselves with a powerful force for personal and spiritual evolution. Selfless service is presented not just as an act of kindness but as a profound practice of Karma Yoga, leading to the natural renunciation of our own desires and selfish actions. This practice diverges starkly from views emphasizing control over the mind, body and senses, suggesting instead that such efforts can be redirected more effectively to gain both spiritual and material wellbeing.

Divine Ascension reframes the journey toward enlightenment as an active engagement with the world, where the dichotomy between self and others is dissolved through the act of service. This not only fosters a deep connection with the divine but also catalyzes a shift in consciousness that transcends the limitations of conventional moral frameworks. It is an invitation to reevaluate our approach to spiritual practice, showing that in selfless service to those we honor and love, we unlock the key to our own divine potential and experience God's infinite abundance.

My commentary starts with the 39th Verse of Chapter 2 because this verse marks a pivotal transition in the *Bhagavad Gita*. Here, Krishna shifts gears from the philosophical teachings of Samkhya to the practical application of Karma Yoga. This verse begins Krishna's discourse on Karma Yoga, which continues through Chapter 5. Karma Yoga is the practice of serving others' desires and so, innocently renouncing our own. This shift to innocently renouncing our desires and the selfish actions they seed is essential as it moves the reader from abstract concepts to actionable steps that one takes to achieve spiritual growth and enlightenment. By starting at this juncture, this book emphasizes the importance of applying philosophical wisdom in everyday life through selfless service, aligning actions with a higher purpose, and quickly attaining inner peace and contentment. This practical approach is

vital for readers actively engaged in life, seeking to harmonize their spiritual and material pursuits through the transformative power of Karma Yoga: serving others' desires and thereby, innocently renouncing their own.

As I embarked on the journey to explore and elucidate the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* on achieving higher levels of consciousness, my own experiences have profoundly shaped the insights and perspectives shared in this book. Personal encounters with the principles of Karma Yoga and the transformative power of selfless service have not only informed my understanding but also enriched my spiritual practice. This book reflects both ancient wisdom and my evolving journey, offering a bridge between the timeless teachings of the *Gita* and practical application in our modern lives. By sharing my experiences, I hope to inspire and guide others on their path to discovering the divine potential within themselves through active engagement with the world around them.

Divine Increase: Harmonizing Physical and Cognitive Realms

In the complex and interwoven web of our universe, physical and cognitive realms coexist, each governed by distinct yet interdependent principles. The physical realm, characterized by its materiality and tangibility, falls under the reign of entropy — a principle signifying disorder and chaos. Entropy dictates that, left to its own devices, everything within the physical domain inevitably moves towards a state of disarray, signifying a universal law as inescapable as gravity. This relentless march towards disorder is not just a scientific observation but a profound reflection of the challenges and disappointments faced in the material world.

Contrastingly, the cognitive realm operates under a different paradigm, governed by divine increase, an orderly outcome that brings happiness. God's divine increase acts as a counterbalance to the disorder of entropy, instilling order within the cognitive realm and, by extension, influencing the physical world. This divine increase is as pervasive in the cognitive realm as entropy is in the physical, influencing all cognitive dynamics towards creating order and thus, happiness in doing so. Even desires that seem to aim for disorder are, at their root, misguided and misfired attempts to achieve happiness through increased order.

Divine Ascension, then, is about aligning with this divine principle that seeks to infuse order, harmony and happiness into the chaos and disappointment of the entropic physical realm. It is an acknowledgment that our inherent nature is to seek out and create order, to align our desires and actions with God's principle of increase, thereby not only navigating but transforming the entropy-dominated physical world. This alignment with creation brings about happiness, not as a fleeting emotion tied to the material gains governed by entropy and ultimate disappointment but as a profound state of being that emanates from creating and experiencing order in alignment with divine will.

The concept of *Divine Ascension* challenges us to reconsider our approach to the physical and cognitive realms. It suggests that the disappointments stemming from entropy's reign in the physical realm can be mitigated, if not overcome, through an alignment with the principle of divine increase in the cognitive realm. This principle acts as a guiding light, encouraging us to bring order and happiness to the disorder around us, not through mere physical rearrangement but through a deeper cognitive realignment with divine principles in higher states of consciousness.

In essence, *Divine Ascension* is a call to action and a way of life. It beckons us to actively participate in the divine order, to use our beliefs, desires, and actions as tools to counteract the entropy inherent in the physical world — and more so, to evolve to higher states of wellbeing where we increasingly experience order in the physical realm. By doing so, we not only find order and happiness from within but also become conduits of divine will, agents of change who bring about order, harmony and divine increase in a world governed by disorder. This journey of aligning with ever-deepening divine increase at higher states of consciousness — Cosmic, Brahman, God — is not a denial of the physical realm's challenges but an embrace of our power to infuse it with order, meaning and happiness through our connection with the divine principal of increase.

Living Divine Increase: Embodying Order in Daily Life

In the previous section, "Divine Increase: Harmonizing the Physical and Cognitive Realms," we embarked on an enlightening journey exploring the intricate balance between the material and cognitive realms of our universe. We developed the understanding that while the physical world is subject to entropy, leading to inevitable disorder and decay, the cognitive realm offers a counterbalance through the divine principle of increase. This principle acts as a beacon of hope, guiding us to infuse order, harmony and happiness into our lives despite the chaos inherent in the physical domain we live in.

As we transition into "Living Divine Increase: Embodying Order in Daily Life," we build upon this foundation, venturing into practical applications of the divine principle of increase in our everyday existence. This section is not merely an extension of the theoretical framework laid out previously but a call to action, urging us to spontaneously embody the divine order in our daily routines and interactions. The wisdom of ancient Vedic teachings and the practical insights from the *Bhagavad Gita* invite us to navigate the complexities of life with a renewed sense of purpose and alignment with the cosmic order.

Embodying divine increase in our daily life is about transforming our desires and actions to gain a higher state of consciousness. It requires us to actively engage with the world around us, not as passive observers but as dynamic participants in the cosmic play of creation. By aligning our desires and actions with the divine principle of increase, we open ourselves to profound increase in spiritual and material wellbeing. This journey of embodiment transcends mere cognitive understanding; we step into a lived experience of divine order, where every moment is an opportunity to manifest order, harmony, balance, and abundance in alignment with the deepest truths of the universe.

The first step on this journey is the awakening to Cosmic Consciousness (*Bhagavad Gita*: Ch 2, 3 and 4), where we begin to see the interconnectedness of all life and ordered existence of the cosmos beyond our individual selves. Here, we embark on the path of selfless service, serving others' desires which naturally renounces our own. This spontaneous renunciation of desire breaks bondage to action, leading to a state where happiness is not sought in external achievements but is found in the unbounded inner contentment of the higher Self. We witness desires and actions running of their own accord from a state of inner peace and restful

alertness. Cosmic Consciousness brings about a dynamic balance, enhancing mental and physical capabilities and grounding us in a state of deep inner contentment and happiness. We experience our Selves as separate from desires and action, which seemingly carry about life and living it, running of their own orderly accord to achieve spiritual and material wellbeing. Unbounded from seeking happiness from the material world, we experience happiness from within.

As we delve deeper into our spiritual practice of serving others' desires, we evolve into Brahman Consciousness (*Bhagavad Gita*: Ch 5), realizing the Self as aligned with Brahman, the ultimate and unchanging reality that brings about all change in the universe. Brahman Consciousness deepens the experience of Self-realization. Practicing selfless service in Cosmic Consciousness purifies the nervous system, allowing us to clearly experience the austere, nonactive higher Self distinct from the active lower self engaged in worldly activities. This separation born of purity promotes inner peace where the light of Brahman illuminates happiness from within. We delight in the welfare of all beings, seeing the freedom of Brahman in everything. Desires, fear and anger depart; awareness settles into our spiritual center — the calm and contented Self-sufficient “dweller within” stands apart from outer activity. Calmness and inner peace mark a significant increase in spiritual wellbeing and a profound sense of unity with all creation. Seeing Brahman's Oneness in all brings familiarity with all, an underlying orderliness to all unordered diversity in creation, deep and Self-sustaining inner peace, and calmness amidst the chaos of the physical realm.

The transition to God Consciousness (*Bhagavad Gita*: Ch 6) marks a shift to a more personal relationship with the divine. In this stage, we see the divine everywhere and also, experience the divine as an intimate presence in our lives. God Consciousness embodies a shift towards a more intimate and personal relationship with the divine, where higher Self befriends lower self. In this state, calmness itself becomes the means for furthering evolution in awareness. The mind absorbed in the higher Self achieves tranquility of Self referring Self back to Self, abandoning personal incentives. Seeing the higher Self in all beings fosters a harmonious relationship between the seer and the seen, transcending attachments, and ultimately, seeing God in everywhere. This expanded vision signifies a quantum leap in spiritual fulfillment, seeing the divine in every aspect of creation fosters experiencing His order in all creation. We feel familiar with the purpose of creation, in tune with its purpose and fulfilled in the creative process at its most fundamental level.

The culmination of this spiritual journey is Knowing God (*Bhagavad Gita*: Ch 7), where seeing God in everything unifies all creation. Transcending the delusion of Maaya, we see the imperishable God in His perishable and ever-changing creation. Faith, desire and the outcomes of actions become indistinguishable from those ordained by God, leading to omniscient wisdom in action. His wisdom brings order to every action in this stage of consciousness, a dance with grace ensues, sinful acts end, and we live in harmony with God's will to enjoy all creation.

Living divine increase embodies divine principles in our daily actions, relationships and pursuits. It invites us to serve the world with a consciousness spontaneously attuned to divine will, transforming our lives and the lives of those around us with the boundless love and generosity of God. Through this journey, we not only achieve personal transformation but also become vehicles of divine grace, bringing about positive change in the world and reflecting the infinite abundance of the divine in everything we do.

Onward: God Lies in the Nitty-Gritty Details

As we transition to my commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*, we find ourselves at a crucial juncture. This next phase of our journey delves deeper into the nuanced realms of practical spirituality and practice of Karma Yoga, where the abstract principles of divine increase and Cosmic Consciousness become vividly tangible through the detailed analysis of ancient texts. It is in the meticulous examination of these sacred writings that we come to appreciate the maxim "God lies in the details," Mies van der Rohe.

In my forthcoming commentaries, we embark on a detailed exploration of the *Bhagavad Gita*'s teachings, each verse serving as a thread in the intricate tapestry of divine wisdom. These commentaries not only illuminate the path to spiritual and material wellbeing but also demonstrate how every aspect of our existence reflects the divine order. It is through the scrutiny of these sacred verses that we uncover the profound interconnectedness of all life and the omnipresence of the divine in even the most mundane aspects of our daily routines.

However, as we delve into these detailed explorations, we must not lose sight of the overarching themes that guide our journey. The principles of wisdom, divine increase and the harmonious balance between the cognitive and physical realms remain the bedrock upon which our understanding is built. As we navigate through the detailed commentaries, remember that these insights deepen our connection to the divine, enriching our lives with a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Rest assured, as we progress through the intricate discussions ahead, we will return to the overarching topics of wisdom and order in the concluding section. There, we will synthesize the detailed analyses into a cohesive understanding, reaffirming the timeless truths that underpin our quest for divine increase and enlightenment. This cyclical journey from broad principles to detailed examination and back to overarching themes exemplifies our holistic approach to spiritual growth, reminding us that in the grand tapestry of existence, every detail contributes to the divine whole.

Bhagavad Gita: Setting the Stage for the Yoga of Action

In the opening chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the stage is meticulously set for Lord Krishna's profound teachings on the Yoga of Action, Karma Yoga. The narrative begins with Arjuna, the mighty warrior, on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, engulfed in a moral and emotional crisis. Torn between his duty as a warrior and his aversion to killing his kinsmen, Arjuna's inner turmoil is palpable. Chapter 1 captures this poignant moment, vividly portraying his despair and hesitation. As we transition into the early verses of Chapter 2, Krishna's voice emerges as the beacon of wisdom and clarity. He begins to address Arjuna's confusion, gently but firmly guiding him towards a deeper understanding of duty, righteousness and the eternal nature of the soul. Krishna introduces the concepts of Samkhya philosophy, laying the groundwork for the more intricate teachings to come. He emphasizes the imperishable nature of the Self and the transient nature of the physical body, urging Arjuna to rise above his emotional turmoil and embrace his duty with equanimity. This initial discourse not only addresses Arjuna's immediate concerns but also paves the way for the introduction of Karma Yoga, the path of selfless action — the spontaneous means to attain equanimity in action. Through this dialogue, Krishna prepares Arjuna — and the reader — for a transformative journey, highlighting the importance of performing one's duty, thereby setting the stage for the comprehensive teachings on the Yoga of Action that follow.

Chapter 1: Arjuna's Dilemma:

Chapter 1 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, opens with a scene brimming with tension and uncertainty. The stage is set for a profound dialogue between Prince Arjuna and Lord Krishna, one that will delve deep into the themes of duty, righteousness and the nature of the Self. As the armies of the Pandavas and the Kauravas prepare for war, Arjuna, standing in his chariot, surveys the battlefield and is overcome with a crisis of conscience. This chapter, rich in its narrative and philosophical underpinnings, lays the groundwork for the teachings that follow.

Arjuna's inner turmoil is palpable as he confronts the reality of fighting against his own kin, revered elders and beloved friends. The sight of familiar faces on both sides of the battlefield fills him with dread and sorrow. He is tormented by the moral implications of the war and the inevitable bloodshed it will bring. This emotional struggle reflects a universal human conflict: the

clash between duty and compassion, between societal obligations and personal values.

Krishna, serving as Arjuna's charioteer, listens patiently as Arjuna articulates his fears and doubts. Arjuna's arguments are poignant and heartfelt. He questions the righteousness of the war and foresees the destruction of family traditions, the rise of irreligion and the ensuing chaos. His despair leads him to the brink of renunciation, as he contemplates abandoning the battlefield to avoid the sin of killing his relatives. This moment of vulnerability and hesitation is crucial as it sets the stage for the teachings that Krishna will impart.

Throughout this chapter, the *Bhagavad Gita* presents a vivid portrayal of Arjuna's psychological state. His hands tremble, his mouth dries up and his body shivers. These physical manifestations of his inner conflict highlight the profound impact of his moral dilemma. Arjuna's plight is not just a personal crisis but a reflection of the broader human condition, where individuals often find themselves torn between competing duties and desires.

Krishna's role in this chapter is primarily that of a compassionate guide. He acknowledges Arjuna's feelings but prepares to offer wisdom that transcends the immediate emotional turmoil. The dialogue between the two, though initially centered on the specifics of the battle, soon promises to expand into broader philosophical discussions that address the fundamental questions of life, duty and the nature of existence.

The narrative structure of Chapter 1 is both dramatic and introspective. It begins with the anticipation of battle and quickly shifts to a deep exploration of Arjuna's inner world. The contrast between the external preparations for war and Arjuna's internal crisis creates a compelling tension that draws the reader into the story. This dual focus on the outer and inner worlds is a hallmark of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which continually weaves together practical and philosophical threads.

In conclusion, Chapter 1 of the *Bhagavad Gita* serves as a powerful introduction to the epic's central themes. It presents Arjuna's profound moral and emotional struggle, setting the stage for the timeless wisdom that Krishna offers. The vivid depiction of Arjuna's crisis and the promise of Krishna's guidance invite readers to reflect on their own lives and the universal challenges of duty, righteousness and self-understanding. As the dialogue unfolds in subsequent chapters, the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* will illuminate a path through the complexities of human existence, offering insights that resonate across the ages.

Chapter 2: Verses 1 – 38: The Path of Selfless Duty — Arjuna's Dilemma and Krishna's Counsel:

In Chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, verses 1-38, we encounter a dialogue of immense depth between the warrior Arjuna and his charioteer, the divine Krishna. This segment of the text delves into the core philosophical principles of Samkhya, establishing a foundation for the practical path of Karma Yoga. The teachings presented here hold timeless relevance, offering profound insights into the nature of selfless action and the cultivation of a balanced mind.

Arjuna, standing on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, faces an intense moral and emotional dilemma. Torn between his duty as a warrior and his deep-seated aversion to killing his kinsmen, he is paralyzed by confusion and sorrow. In this moment of crisis, Krishna begins to guide Arjuna towards a higher understanding of his duty, emphasizing the distinction between the eternal Self and the transient physical body.

The philosophy of Samkhya forms the bedrock of Krishna's initial discourse. Samkhya categorizes the elements of existence and differentiates between the higher Self and the material world. Krishna elucidates that the Self, being eternal and indestructible, transcends the temporary physical form. Thus, Arjuna's fear of killing his relatives is misplaced, for the true Self cannot be slain. This realization serves as a precursor to embracing the path of Karma Yoga.

Karma Yoga, or the yoga of selfless action, is seamlessly integrated into the teachings of Samkhya. Krishna asserts that one must perform their duties without attachment to results, naturally, thereby attaining spiritual liberation. This principle of spontaneous detached action is pivotal in breaking the cycle of desire-driven actions that bind individuals to the material world. By serving others' desires and thereby spontaneously renouncing personal gains, one aligns with the cosmic order, fostering inner peace and fulfillment.

The essence of Karma Yoga lies in the harmonious balance between action and spontaneous non-involvement with it. Arjuna is urged to act according to his dharma as a warrior. This balanced approach achieved through selfless action enables the practitioner to maintain equanimity amidst success and failure. The mind, thus anchored in the higher Self, remains unaffected by the dualities of life, fostering a state of inner tranquility.

Krishna further expounds on the nature of wisdom and self-mastery, illustrating the characteristics of a person established in the higher Self. Such an individual, having transcended desires, remains steadfast in the face of pleasure and pain. Their actions, free from selfish motives, spontaneously align with the greater good, embodying skillfulness and righteousness.

The teachings encapsulated in these verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* offer a profound roadmap for navigating the complexities of life. The integration of Samkhya's philosophical insights with the practical tenets of Karma Yoga underscores the importance of selfless service and inner contentment. By embracing these principles, one transcends the ephemeral nature of the material world, attaining a state of enduring peace and spiritual fulfillment. This path of selfless duty in the practice of Karma Yoga, as elucidated by Krishna, remains ever-relevant, guiding individuals towards a life of purpose, balance and divine alignment.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 2 — Understand

Renunciation of Desire

Whenever we serve others' desires, we innocently renounce our own desires and the selfish actions they seed.

Commentary on Ch 2 verses 39 - 72:

My commentary starts with verse 2.39, the point where Krishna shifts gears from philosophy of Samkhya to the practice of Karma Yoga, the practice for achieving Cosmic Consciousness (Ch 2, 3, and 4) and Brahman Consciousness (Ch 5).

Bondage to action:

Overview:

During our lives, we often find ourselves ensnared in cycles of action that seem both endless and inevitable. This cycle begins with impressions — sensory experiences and thoughts that mold our perceptions and beliefs. These impressions, like seeds sown in the fertile soil of the mind, sprout into desires. Our restless and imaginative mind transforms these impressions into cravings, ambitions and desires. Once born, these desires drive us toward action.

Our desires seed the actions we undertake. We manifest actions as efforts to achieve, obtain, control, and enjoy. However, these actions do not represent the end but rather part of a larger, intricate cycle. Each action imprints upon our consciousness, creating new impressions that birth further desires, and thus, the wheel of impression-desire-action turns, seemingly without end.

This cycle of impression-desire-action binds us to the material world. It keeps us focused on the external, the transient and the impermanent. In this state, we often drive our actions with selfish motives and the pursuit of personal gain and pleasure. We entangle ourselves in a web of our own making, a web that distracts us from the higher purpose of life.

The *Bhagavad Gita* illuminates a path out of this bondage. It teaches that true freedom lies in selfless action, in performing one's duties without attachment to the results. When we act without desire for personal gain, we transcend the cycle of action that binds us. Our actions, instead of creating

new desires, become offerings to the divine. In this state of selfless service, we align ourselves with our higher Self, with the divine essence within us.

Krishna's teachings guide us to recognize that our higher Self transcends the impressions and desires of the material world. This higher Self remains untouched by the cycle of action and retains its eternal freedom. By surrendering our actions to the Divine and naturally performing them with detachment, we purify our minds and hearts. This purification leads us to a state of inner peace and true freedom.

We experience profound rewards by breaking free from the cycle of impression-desire-action. We attain a state of liberation where our actions harmonize with the will of the divine, and our lives fill with purpose and grace. Bondage to action represents a fundamental aspect of human existence, binding us to the material world and obscuring our connection to the divine. However, through selfless service, we transcend this cycle and attain true freedom. By aligning our actions with our higher Self and surrendering them to the Divine, we break free from the chains of desire and find the path to inner peace and liberation.

2.39. Lord Krishna: *Having heard the philosophical understanding of Samkhya, now hear my teaching applied to Yoga. Your intellect established through the practice of it, you will cast away the bondage of karma [the bondage to action].*

“The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear of its fill of hearing.” — *Ecclesiastes*

Here, Krishna shifts gears from theoretical to practical, from philosophy to action. Through Samkhya's philosophy on consciousness and cognition, Krishna has instructed Arjuna not to fear death. Only by fearlessly performing his duty will Arjuna liberate himself from incurring sin and the miserably dithering and indecisive state he finds himself in.

This foundational verse identifies the goal of liberation and lays out the obstacles to achieving it.

Karma and Yoga: Karma means action. First and foremost, karma means taking action to liberate oneself from the ‘*bondage of karma*,’ from the bondage to action.

Yoga means union of lower self within higher Self. The lower self ever-changes, perishable; the higher Self never-changes, imperishable, eternal. The lower self is bounded individuality of senses, mind, intellect, and ego; the higher Self is Absolute unbounded universal contentment. The lower self lives in time and space; the higher Self exists outside the passage of time and just is. The lower self achieves outcomes and bears their consequences; the higher Self exists free from outcomes and consequences. We know the lower self in our everyday experiences by names like Arden, Blair and Charlie; we know the higher Self by achieving inner contentment. For the strong mind, lower self unites within higher Self and takes on its Absolute and unbounded qualities.

For the weak mind, lower self binds to endless, fruitless actions to find happiness in objects of desire. Bound to the rollercoaster ups-and-downs and twists-and-turns to find happiness “out there” in the material world, the excitable lower self overshadows the steady nature of higher Self. We lose the forest for the trees. Individuality overrides universality. Life suffers. Conflicts and frustrations arise. Infrequently, life is smooth and rewarding, as we instinctively know it should be. We more often scratch across the grooves of life than find ourselves merrily tapping a foot in tune with it.

Intellect to the rescue: *‘Your intellect established through the practice of’* Karma Yoga, achieve union of lower self within higher Self, achieve Yoga. *Definitions:* intellect discerns between true and false; ego — the subtlest quality of intellect — discerns who we truly are. Through the practice of Karma Yoga, we strengthen ego and identify with the ultimate Truth: I am unbounded Self. Unbounded includes all that is bound. The bounded lower self unites within higher Self and takes on its Absolute contented nature.

In union of lower self within higher Self, conflicts and frustrations dissipate. We no longer rely on actions to achieve happiness through material gain. We do not have to. Content deep within, we remain at peace on the level of Absolute Self. Out of inner peace, happiness.

We no longer rely on action to achieve happiness in objects of desire. No action, no binding influence of it. Liberated. We *‘cast away the bondage of karma,’* the bondage to action.

Bondage of Karma: We become bound to our actions when desires connect the senses with attractive qualities found in objects of sensory experience. The sight of a spiffy new Porsche, touch of silk, sound of enchanting music, alluring scent of perfume, and feel of new running shoes capture attention

and pull mind, intellect and ego out into the ever-changing, relative field of life.

In a sense, desire suckers the weak mind into thinking we have arrived. The happiness we seek in some sensory experience is the real deal. We are there: '*I have found the lasting happiness I have always sought.*' Or so we think. Or rather, so we imagine.

Through the office of desire, imagination takes over. Seeing an ad for vacationing in Bora Bora, we imagine running through the surf, cool water splashing our sun-warmed skin, the scent of hibiscus, a Bahama Mama sucked through a long straw poked into a coconut.

The mind's imagined sensory experiences and a busy feeling of progress gained by strategizing on attaining them capture our attention and overshadow the intellect's ability to discern Reality and Truth. Imagination and feelings of progress overshadow the ego's identity with our unbounded Absolute Self. The ego loses sight of who we really are, unbounded inner contentment, Absolute Self.

All-powerful desire hijacks refined qualities of mind, intellect and ego, and drags them "out there" to where we think we'll find happiness in the everchanging relative field of life. This, even though we full-well know that contentment and lasting happiness lie within. We get all involved in the lower self's desires, thoughts, strategies, and actions to attain the object of desire. The deep-rooted and steady nature of ego identified with Absolute Self gets caught up in the everchanging.

We take *action* to acquire the desired object and experience the happiness it promises. But in time, the object loses allure. Failure to find lasting happiness — say, in Bora Bora — registers an *impression* of dissatisfaction deep within the mind. A *desire* arises to take *action* anew and find happiness in some different object of the senses, say, a new pair of running shoes. Desire seeds action anew. We buy the running shoes, go for a run and experience measures of happiness. But again, in time, happiness wears thin and we experience an impression of dissatisfaction.

This binding influence of action fixes us to a cycle of *impression-desire-action*. Bound to our actions, our attention flows ever outward away from inner contentment and lasting happiness, the very goals sought in taking action in the first place. This is bondage to action. Since Karma means action, this is '*bondage of karma.*'

In this verse, Lord Krishna introduces Karma Yoga, guiding Arjuna to liberate himself through selfless action. The following assures that in practicing Karma Yoga, no effort is wasted and obstacles are absent. This teaching emphasizes the transformative power of selfless service and aligning actions with the eternal Self for liberation (2.45).

2.40. In practicing Karma Yoga no effort is forfeited and no obstacle to completion exists. A little of this dharma protects one from great peril.

"I've been in my mind; it's such a fine line; that keeps me searching for a heart of gold," Neal Young. Dharma is the omnipresent magnetic field of evolution flowing through us, guiding us to higher spiritual and material wellbeing. In practicing Karma Yoga, we immerse ourselves into the flowing field of dharma and quickly evolve to those higher levels. Our dharma is to practice Karma Yoga (2.45).

'No effort is forfeited' because to break the bondage to action (previous verse) merely requires trading selfish desires for selfless ones (2.45). As we shall see, the power of liberation far exceeds any effort expended in switching between the two. In confidence, we step effortlessly along our path.

'No obstacle to completion exists' because the practice of Karma Yoga is in our DNA and comes naturally to us (3.10). We were born to practice Karma Yoga, to serve those we honor and love. In performing it, we break '*bondage to karma*' (previous verse) and instantly achieve measures of liberation. So how can an '*obstacle*' obstruct our progress when we achieve our goal in each step taken?

Step-by-step liberation delivers from the '*great peril*' of instinctively knowing liberation from action exists but not understanding how to attain it. Even a little of this practice of Karma Yoga liberates us from the great peril of bondage to action. Quickly the scales fall from our eyes. We see possibilities and an order to things that protect us '*from great peril*' of forever being bound to our actions.

Here, Krishna assures that practicing Karma Yoga incurs no loss of effort and lacks obstacles. Transitioning to the following verse, Krishna contrasts the focused intellect of Karma Yoga practitioners with the scattered minds of non-practitioners, highlighting the profound impact of discernment in breaking the bondage to action and achieving union with the higher Self.

2.41. *In practicing Karma Yoga, the resolute intellect is focused, Arjuna, but the intellects of the irresolute have many branches and are infinitely various.*

In practicing Karma Yoga (2.45), we break bondage to action. Higher Self outshines excited and jittery lower self. Under the influence of Absolute Self, intellect steadies, discerns what is Real and True, and resolutely points us along our dharmic path to higher spiritual and material wellbeing (previous verse).

For non-practitioners, attractive qualities found in objects of sensory experience overshadow intellect. Non-practitioners, who are bound to actions to find happiness in objects of desire, forgo the intellect's steady powers of discernment gained in practicing Karma Yoga. Unresolved in intellect, attractive qualities in objects of the senses pull mind and intellect from one unfulfilling desire and action to the next (the cycle of impression-desire-action, 2.39). '*But the intellects of the irresolute*' non-practitioners, forever seeking happiness outside themselves, travel '*infinitely various*' paths to nowhere.

Krishna emphasizes the resolute intellect in practitioners of Karma Yoga, contrasting it with the scattered minds of non-practitioners. This sets the stage for the following verse, where Krishna criticizes those absorbed in the letter of the Veda, lacking discernment of its deeper meaning, and indulging in selfish actions without understanding the spiritual essence of the scriptures.

Selfish action:

Overview:

In the complex fabric of human existence, we find ourselves often entangled in the threads of selfish action, driven by desires that tie us to the physical and transient world. This bondage to action, a cycle fueled by our impressions, desires and subsequent actions, holds us captive, perpetuating a state of dissatisfaction and longing.

Selfish action roots itself in the very nature of our desires. Absorbed in the allure of material gains and pleasures, individuals often become fixated on the rewards of their actions, mistakenly believing these to be the goal of life. This misconception leads to a cycle where one desire inevitably gives rise to another, keeping the mind in a constant state of unrest. When Krishna addresses the notion of selfish action, He highlights the futility of such

pursuits. Those who seek happiness through external objects or outcomes inevitably find disappointment, as true contentment lies within the Self.

The attachment to material rewards and pleasures is a common pitfall. It stems from an incomplete understanding of the deeper truths of existence. People often get lost in the "flowery words" of sacred texts, mistaking the literal for the profound. This shallow interpretation focuses on the promise of rebirth and heavenly rewards, neglecting the spiritual essence that transcends these earthly pursuits. Such individuals have a "myopic vision," limited to the horizontal plane of life, thus hindering their spiritual evolution.

Furthermore, Krishna elucidates that those obsessed with enjoyment and power cannot attain a steady intellect. Their scattered minds and attachment to fleeting pleasures prevent them from experiencing inner contentment. This lack of inner stability results from an overreliance on external validations and the pursuit of power and wealth, which are inherently impermanent.

In contrast, the path to liberation involves a shift from selfish desires to selfless actions. By engaging in selfless service, one breaks free from the cycle of impression-desire-action. Serving others without attachment to the outcomes purifies the mind and aligns it with the higher Self. This practice, known as Karma Yoga, allows individuals to act without bondage to their actions, fostering a sense of inner peace and contentment independent of external circumstances.

Krishna advises that performing one's duty is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of our bodies requires action, underscoring the inevitability and necessity of engaging in actions. However, the key is to perform these actions selflessly, with the intent of serving others rather than fulfilling personal desires. This approach transforms ordinary tasks into acts of worship, elevating the individual towards spiritual liberation.

Moreover, Krishna emphasizes the importance of understanding the role of the gunas, the fundamental forces of nature, in driving actions. Those who comprehend this truth recognize that these natural forces perform actions, not themselves. This realization frees them from the delusion of being the doer, allowing actions to flow naturally and harmoniously without attachment or pride.

In essence, the journey towards overcoming selfish action involves a profound internal transformation. By shifting focus from personal desires to selfless service, individuals transcend the binding nature of their actions. This liberation leads to a state of steady intellect and inner contentment, where

one performs duties effortlessly and joyfully, fully aligned with the higher Self. Through such practice, we realize the goal of life, achieving a state of unity with the divine and eternal peace.

2.42. *Absorbed in the letter of the Veda the indiscriminating proclaim there is no deeper meaning and speak flowery words.*

The Vedas explain the journey of evolution to higher states of consciousness. They detail, in a progressive manner, how life integrates and offer guidance on the disciplined actions that enable one to swiftly progress through various stages of evolution and ultimately achieve liberation.

In their myopic vision, '*the indiscriminating*' exercise poor judgment (non-practitioners, previous verse). '*Absorbed in the letter of the Veda*' they see only what they can, the Vedas literal language but not its spirit. Through the Vedas, they see only selfish ends and seek greater material wellbeing to achieve happiness and liberation from bondage to action. *Sans* the spirit of the Vedas, their endless quest for more focuses vision on text only. Biased to see enduring happiness within attractive qualities found in objects of the senses, they '*declare there is no deeper meaning*' to the Vedas than the letter of it.

The problem is, without complementary growth in spiritual wellbeing, acquiring material wealth holds those '*absorbed in the letter*' to the horizontal plane of life. Irresolute in intellect (previous verse) and self-deluded about the Vedas, '*the indiscriminating*' seek ever greater material wealth to gain happiness. In their never-ending quest for satisfaction through material possessions, they fix themselves to the cycle of impression-desire-action (2.39) and wander about in swamp-sucking disappointment, mistakenly seeing selfish petitionary action as the key to liberation.

Ignorance is bliss. Bondage is its own safe space. Attractive qualities found in objects of the senses offer fleeting degrees of happiness and liberation. Seeing the Vedas as only a means to liberation through the attainment of material wealth and power, '*the indiscriminating*' demonstrate the shallowness of their understanding. They speak '*flowery words*' describing the glories of attachment to objects of the senses to reassure themselves and convince others to join their folly. Misery loves company.

Here, Krishna criticizes those absorbed in the letter of the Veda, proclaiming no deeper meaning and indulging in flowery words. In the following verse, Krishna describes them as full of selfish desires, seeking heavenly rewards,

and addicted to Vedic rites, highlighting their ignorance and attachment to material gains, hindering spiritual evolution.

2.43. Full of selfish desires and intent on heavenly rewards, they offer rebirth as the reward for action and are addicted to Vedic rites for attaining enjoyment and power.

'Absorbed in the letter of the Veda' (previous verse) leaves one 'full of selfish desires' for more, which refuel dissatisfaction born of action to seek happiness in the material world (2.39). Fixed on the horizontal plane of life through selfish desires, 'the indiscriminating' (previous verse) see action as the agency to 'rebirth' and increase in 'heavenly rewards.' They see the Vedas only to increase 'enjoyment and power' — not to rise through all levels of evolution and live in contented Absolute higher Self.

Focused on 'the letter of the Veda' and seduced by their own 'flowery words' (previous verse), the undiscerning favor petitionary Vedic actions for more material wellbeing. They lose sight of the vertical plane and final liberation from bondage. Instead, they choose seductive pleasures bearing bondage.

Krishna describes individuals absorbed in Vedic rituals, driven by selfish desires and seeking heavenly rewards. In the following verse, He explains that a steady intellect doesn't arise in those fixated on enjoyment and power, captivated by their own superficial words; He emphasizes the negative consequences of attachment to material pursuits.

2.44. Steady intellect does not arise in those obsessed with enjoyment and power and firmly fascinated by their own flowery words.

We gain 'steady intellect' by the ego identified with Absolute Self (following verse). Therefore, 'steady intellect does not arise' in the minds of those possessed by selfish desires who identify with the vicissitudes of 'enjoyment and power' (previous verse). Attention held by attractive qualities found in objects of the senses, the irresolute live on the horizontal plane of life in the letter of the Vedas (2.42). Senses, mind, intellect, and ego skip from one 'enjoyment' and exercise of 'power' to the next, stemming steady cognitive powers born of inner contentment.

'Fascinated by their own flowery words' speaks volumes to the delusion of seeking lasting happiness outside ourselves in the relative field of life. Deep in our heart-of-hearts, we know eternal happiness lies within and that

'enjoyment and power' turn attention in the opposite direction to the steady nature of contented Self. And yet, having neither experienced liberation from action nor gained an understanding of how to engender it, those who seek *'steady intellect'* through selfish petitionary Vedic action are rudderless and lost at sea under a foggy mist of ignorance.

Krishna asserts that a steady intellect doesn't arise in those obsessed with enjoyment and power. In the following verse, Krishna introduces the concept that the Vedas belong to the realm of the three Gunas (forces of nature) and advises Arjuna to transcend these Gunas, be liberated from life's dualities, and remain fixed in purity through selfless action.

Karma Yoga: Shankara's teaching on selfless service:

Overview:

This is Karma Yoga: Shankara's teachings offer a path to liberation through selfless service. This ancient wisdom, deeply rooted in the philosophy of selfless action, reveals the profound impact of serving others' desires while innocently renouncing our own. By doing so, we break free from the binding cycle of impression-desire-action at the level of desire, turning our minds toward the true source of happiness within.

At the heart of Karma Yoga lies the principle of selfless service. In our daily lives, we often find ourselves entangled in the pursuit of personal desires, believing that fulfillment lies in the attainment of material goals. However, Shankara guides us to a different understanding. He teaches that true liberation and inner peace come not from satisfying our own desires but from dedicating our actions to the service of others. When we serve others' desires, we innocently renounce our own, creating a space where the mind naturally turns inward to the eternal wellspring of happiness.

This practice of Karma Yoga is transformative. Consider the simple act of setting the table for a family meal. On the surface, it may seem mundane, but when done with the intention of serving others, it becomes an act of selfless service. The focus shifts from personal gain to the wellbeing and joy of those we serve. In this shift, the mind begins to detach from its own cravings and desires. The repetitive cycle of impression-desire-action, where every impression creates a new desire leading to yet another action, is gently interrupted on the level of desire.

Shankara teaches that this renunciation happens naturally, not through force or suppression, but through the innocent act of prioritizing others' desires

over our own. As we serve others, we experience a subtle but profound shift. The mind, which is usually restless and constantly seeking external gratification, starts to calm. It begins to recognize that true contentment does not lie in the fulfillment of fleeting desires but in the unchanging, boundless Self within.

Imagine helping a friend move into a new home. The labor involved can be strenuous, yet when approached with the spirit of selfless service, it transcends physical effort. The act of helping becomes a meditation in motion, an offering without expectation. This is the essence of Karma Yoga. By serving others' desires we innocently renounce our own, we disengage from our ego-driven pursuits and connect with the deeper, more universal aspects of our Being.

Through such practices, we gradually dismantle the bondage of action. Each selfless act reinforces our connection to the higher Self, cultivating a sense of inner peace and joy that external achievements never provide. The cycle of impression-desire-action loses its grip, and we find ourselves less driven by external circumstances and more anchored in the serenity of our inner Self.

Krishna's teaching on Karma Yoga, emphasizes that by performing our duties, we align our actions with divine will. This alignment not only liberates us from the ego's incessant demands but also harmonizes our lives with the greater cosmic order. In this state of union, or Yoga, our actions become spontaneous expressions of the divine, free from the burdens of personal expectation and desire.

In conclusion, Shankara's teaching on selfless service through Karma Yoga offers a path to transcendence. By serving others' desires and thereby innocently renouncing our own, we break the cycle of impression-desire-action at its pivot point. This practice turns the mind inward, revealing the true source of happiness within the higher Self. It is a journey from the transient to the eternal, from bondage to liberation, where every selfless act becomes a step towards realizing our divine nature. Through Karma Yoga, we discover that the highest joy comes not from what we achieve for ourselves, but from what we selflessly give to others.

2.45. The Vedas' belong to the realm of the three Gunas of Nature, Arjuna. Be without the three Gunas, liberated from life's dualities, fixed in purity, free of possessiveness, possessed of the Self.

"This [realizing one's Self] happens by selflessly being good to others. If one stops following selfish impulses, internal selfish desires stop. If selfish

desires stop, then selfish thoughts cease. Permanent cessation of selfish desire is called ‘freedom even in this life’ — Jeevanmukti — Liberation while still alive in the physical body.” — Shankara, *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*.

Three Gunas: The Three Gunas of Nature underly all action: (1) Rajas | spur, (2) Sattva | development and direction, and (3) Tamas | check or retard. The Gunas uphold all creation, in all things and all ways. The Gunas create, develop and dissolve one stage of reality flowing into the next. All actions stem from the Gunas of Nature.

Cut to the chase: *‘Be without the three Gunas.’*

Be without the three Gunas: “All for freedom. Freedom for all.” — *Harley-Davidson*. Arjuna is the all-time poster boy for getting all wrapped around the axle. To snap Arjuna out of his obsession with right and wrong action, Krishna instructs him to be without involvement in action: *‘Be without the three Gunas.’* On the level of higher Self, be without involvement in action and its consequences (2.39).

Krishna’s teaching is a masterstroke of simplicity and effectiveness: to achieve the best course of action, be without involvement in action. Live on the level of higher Self and go with the flow of Nature’s desire to further evolution (2.51). Do not look for solutions to issues of righteous right and sinful wrong action on the level of action itself. Renounce action, else dissolve into a puddle of cowardliness, dithering and inaction.

Renunciation of action: We cannot do two things at once. The moment we act to fulfill others’ desires, we break the cycle of impression-desire-action at the level of our desire to find happiness in the material world (2.39). No desire, no involvement in the actions desires seed. The dweller in the body — the individualized nature of the Self — achieves nonattachment, unboundedness and liberation from action, the goal set by Krishna in verse 2.39. *‘You will cast away the bondage of karma [the bondage of action].’* We transcend desire, involvement in action and the relative field of life. *‘Be without the three Gunas.’* No selfish desire, no selfish action, no impression of dissatisfaction to spur desire and action anew. Let Nature’s desires guide all actions along your path of dharma to higher levels of spiritual and material wellbeing (2.51). Renouncing our desires and the actions they seed by selflessly serving others’ desires is the practice of Karma Yoga.

This complete practice of Karma Yoga involves only serving the desires of others while innocently renouncing our own. *‘No effort is lost and no obstacle to completion exists.’* Renouncing desire happens naturally because of

serving others' desires, rather than as a deliberate effort to control mind, body and senses. Restraining body and senses and resisting desires, as in the established practice of Karma Yoga, begone. Serve others' desires and throw resisting desires and restraining actions under the bus.

This poor understanding of the practice has turned Karma Yoga on its head, where the practice requires choosing "right" actions over "wrong" actions. Instead, Krishna teaches (4.17): "Unfathomable is the course of action." As we shall soon see in verse 2.47, "right" action naturally results from sacrificing desire. Thus, right action is not the practice of Karma Yoga but rather, a consequence of it.

Desireless and liberated from action and bondage to it, the outward flow of attention to find happiness "out there" in the material world stops dead in its tracks. The omnipresent flow of dharma turns awareness within toward more refined levels of contentment and happiness. At the finest level of awareness, the ego identifies with our ultimate Reality and Truth. *Sans* distractions of the material world, we realize our true nature. We are unbounded inner contentment of Absolute Self.

Union (Yoga): We achieve union of bounded outer activity (lower self) within the unbounded nature of contentment (higher Self). Inner contentment just is, non-dimensional, unchanging, Absolute, unbounded. By definition, the unbounded includes all that is bound. Bounded lower self unites within unbounded higher Self. Feeling, thinking and acting (self) coexists within all-pervading universal contentment (Self). Unboundedness of higher Self infuses individual mind, intellect and ego.

In union of lower self within higher Self, right actions, achieving balance of mind and Self-control (2.60) result from the practice itself, not from deliberately controlling body, mind and senses, as taught in the canonical practice of Karma Yoga. As we shall see in the following verses of this chapter, when we operate from lower self under the influence of higher Self, we effortlessly perform right actions that support growth in spiritual and material wellbeing, we gain inner equilibrium of contentment, which brings balance of mind, and we naturally gain control over lower self's mind, intellect and actions. Acting according to evolution, finding mental balance and exercising Self-control (2.60) over our wandering mind and wavering intellect happen effortlessly, without the need for any intentional effort — merely as a matter of having innocently renounced desires by serving others' desires.

In union of self within Self, desires fail to drag refined qualities of mind, intellect and ego out into the ever-changing field of reality. Thus, we

experience desires on the surface of the mind; deep within, desires no longer occur. This is the experience of union (or Yoga): simultaneously maintaining never-changing inner contentment of higher Self while engaged in dynamic outer activity of lower self.

Cardinal virtues: In union, lower self takes on qualities of higher Self and we feel comfortable, secure and familiar with all. The glow of inner contentment infuses actions. Moral and ethical values blossom.

- **Fortitude:** We are '*liberated from life's dualities*' of disunion between lower self and higher Self. Outer and inner live in harmonious union of inner contentment. Tugs of heart (feelings) and mind (logic) cease to whipsaw us into conflicting feelings, thoughts and actions that wear us down. Life's dualities of success and failure, progress and reversal, ups and downs, easy and hard ... release their grip in the glow of fulfilling inner contentment. Freed from fear engendered by life's dualities, virtues of courage and fortitude flourish.

- **Discernment:** '*Liberated from life's dualities*' [ups and downs, progress and reversal, success and failure, right and wrong, happiness and sadness, hot and cold, in the groove and out of tune] we operate from refined levels of inner awareness '*fixed in purity*' of selfless intention to serve others. Harmful wrong actions retarding evolution fall away. In the contented nature of Self, '*purity*' of right actions supporting evolution prevails. Virtues of prudence and discernment to take a course of action supporting evolution come naturally.

- **Justice:** '*Fixed in purity*' and content deep within, we feel fulfilled. In need of nothing, self-worth exists '*free of possessiveness*.' Attachments begone. We cast away the burden of tightly holding onto what we have and the need to possess what others have. We break free from emotional attachments to outcomes, exercise positive aspects of our personality and enjoy life in actions we take. '*Free of possessiveness*' and liberated from selfish attitudes of avarice and envy, virtues of just and right actions naturally come to the fore.

- **Moderation:** Inner contentment of higher Self pervades and illuminates all action. '*Free of possessiveness*' the glow of calm inner contentment governs feelings, thoughts and actions. Balanced in the equanimity of Self we act dynamically and skillfully, readily achieving outcomes. '*Possessed of the Self*,' rather than possessed by objects of desire, the virtue of Self-control comes from within, tempering appetite and moderating strong desires of lust, longing, attachment, and need.

Practice: It is not called a “practice” for nothing. Achieve Cosmic Consciousness through the practice of Karma Yoga. Each time we serve others’ desires, we experience steady intellect and union of self within Self. Depth and duration of experience depend on strength of mind. Continued practice of Karma Yoga — spontaneously renouncing desires by serving others’ desires — strengthens the mind and enlivens experiences of higher Self and the harmonious union of lower self within it. In short time, we fully identify with higher Self and become established in union, established in Yoga.

Test drive: Take the practice of Karma Yoga for a test drive. Perform some simple act of service: set the table for your mom, hold the door open for a burdened colleague, make a cup of tea for a friend. In the snap of a finger, liberation from bondage to action, feelings of inner wellbeing and smiles all around.

In this verse, Krishna guides Arjuna to transcend the three Gunas (forces of nature) and perform selfless actions. Linking to the following verse, Krishna emphasizes that the Vedas belong to the realm of the Gunas and instructs Arjuna to live beyond them, emphasizing the practice of Karma Yoga to achieve liberation while alive in the physical body.

2.46. All the Vedas are of no more value than is a small well flooded by water on every side for the Brahmana who knows.

Having transcended action (previous verse), of what use are the Vedas, the laws of action.

The ‘*Brahmana who knows*’ lives in quiet inner awareness of Absolute Self, unmoved by actions and their consequences, knowing the Self is separate from all activity.

In the previous verse, we learned that the Vedas were concerned with action. Krishna’s instructions were to be without involvement in action as prescribed by the Vedas. Here Krishna goes further, having innocently renounced action and achieved union of self with Self through the practice of Karma Yoga the Vedas have no value. Claim independence from them.

Once arrived, what use is a roadmap? Beyond action and in the fulfilling nature of contented Self, the Brahmana’s “cup runneth over” in liberation from bondage to action. So, what value are step-by-step Vedic instructions for achieving liberation? Being without the three Gunas (previous verse), ‘*All*

the Vedas are of no more value than is a small well flooded by water on every side.'

Rather than pursue prescribed Vedic actions, right actions come naturally (following verse).

Here, Krishna advises Arjuna to perform actions while naturally being detached from their outcomes, emphasizing the importance of selfless service. Connecting to the following verse, Krishna underscores the individual's control over actions, not their results, urging Arjuna to avoid attachment to the fruits of actions and to stay engaged in righteous deeds.

Right action:

Overview:

The concept of "right action" can be distilled into a simple, yet profound principle: practice Karma Yoga and innocently act without attachment to the results. This notion of spontaneous right action liberated from attachment is central to achieving harmony and balance in life, guiding us toward a state of inner contentment and fulfillment.

In the heart of our daily existence, right action emerges not from a desire for personal gain, but from a place of selfless service. When we perform actions naturally detached from outcomes, we align ourselves with a higher purpose. This alignment fosters a sense of equilibrium, where our lower self merges seamlessly with our higher Self — and where all actions are right actions supporting spiritual and material wellbeing

Right action, as illustrated by Krishna's teachings, encourages us to engage in activities that promote spiritual and material wellbeing. Actions rooted in the practice of Karma Yoga, serve others' desires, break the cycle of impression-desire-action at the level of desire. By focusing on the desires of others, we innocently renounce our own desires, allowing our minds to naturally turn inward to the happiness that lies within — and engage in action rooted in inner contentment.

This inward turn is not about retreating from the world but about engaging with it from a place of inner contentment. When our actions are driven by this inner peace, they feel spontaneous and right, almost effortless. In this state of being, we act in accord with Nature, where our actions naturally further evolution and promote the greater good.

One of the key aspects of right action is balance of mind, which arises from the union of our lower self with the higher Self. This union is called Yoga and is characterized by a mind that is stable and unaffected by the dualities of success and failure, pleasure and pain. Established in this equilibrium, our naturally balance actions lead to outcomes that are beneficial to all.

Krishna advises that by practicing Karma Yoga and serving others' desires selflessly, we achieve a state of liberation from the binding effects of action. This liberation is marked by a steady intellect and a contentment that is unaffected by external circumstances. The wise, who have relinquished desires and immersed their intellect in the Self, find eternal liberation from the cycle of impression-desire-action.

In this state of wisdom, actions align with Nature's desires, transcending the pursuit of personal gains. The practice of right action leads to spontaneous, life-supporting and inherently harmonious actions. This path of selfless service not only promotes individual wellbeing but also contributes to the harmony and balance of the world.

Therefore, right action is not merely about what we do, but how we do it. It is about performing our duties with a spirit of selfless service, naturally detached from the fruits of our actions. This approach not only brings personal fulfillment but also fosters a sense of unity with the greater whole, guiding us toward a more enlightened and harmonious existence.

2.47. You have control over action, not its fruits. Therefore, neither live for the fruits of action nor attach yourself to inaction.

Having transcended action and the laws governing action (previous two verses), who controls action?

'You have control over action.' You are in the driver's seat. Choose to act selflessly and foster evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing, right action. Or choose to act selfishly and hamper evolution, wrong action. Perform right actions and readily accomplish outcomes benefiting all. Perform wrong actions and leave outcomes to other fates.

Right and wrong actions: Selfless right actions further evolution. Practicing Karma Yoga is right action (2.45). Selflessly serving others' desires, we break bondage to action and realize inner contentment of higher Self. Spontaneously *'liberated from life's dualities,' 'fixed in purity,' 'freed from*

possessiveness, 'possessed of the Self' (Cardinal virtues, 2.45), we naturally act in accord with Nature to further evolution.

In performing right actions, the uplifting feeling of liberation fuels us forward through thick and thin. Content deep within, unmindful of outcomes, while simultaneously motivated to achieve them, we pour single-minded attention into accomplishing tasks that need doing. Playing heads-up ball, we remain instinctively aware of what's important and unmindful of what's not. Fulfilled within (previous verse), we make "right" decisions without regard to loss and gain. Feeling harmony between quiet inner awareness and outer activity, the path of action to higher levels of wellbeing rolls out in front of us.

On the other hand, selfish wrong actions impede growth in spiritual and material wellbeing. By engaging in wrong actions, we become a negative force. Wrong actions harm others; hinder achieving outcomes; produce stress, strain and damaging influences on others and our environment; diminish the greater good of past right actions. Wrong actions result from selfish attitudes of avarice, anger, fear, revenge... Selfishness points attention outwards and opposes the inward pull of dharma toward greater happiness (2.40). Consequently, selfish attitudes and wrong actions reinforce bondage to action and distance us from life-supporting right actions and evolution.

The good news: selfless right actions obviate selfish, wrong actions. Mutually exclusive right and wrong actions cannot co-occur. Inner contentment from selfless actions leaves no room for negative emotions, bad attitudes and selfish wrong actions. Favor right actions, that is, practice Karma Yoga.

Fruits of action: Putting attention on '*fruits of action*,' we siphon energy away from actions to achieve them. We miss opportunities and become less attentive and effective than we could otherwise be. We focus on the horizontal plane of material rewards and lose sight of the vertical plane and the purpose of action, which is liberation from bondage to it (2.45).

'Nor attach yourself to inaction.' Action is the name of the game. It is called Karma Yoga, the yoga of action. Attached to inaction, we become lethargic and fall asleep at the wheel. We numb ourselves to the joys of action and accomplishment. As contradictory as it sounds, liberation from bondage to action requires action. No selfless right action to break action's binding influence, no evolution, no peace of mind, no happiness (2.66). Favor right actions, that is, practice Karma Yoga.

Practice makes perfect: Achieve Cosmic Consciousness through selfless right actions to serve others' desires. Break bondage to action by action alone. Through repeated acts of selfless service, sever bondage to action and achieve liberation from it.

Serving others' desires — practicing Karma Yoga — we transcend personal limitations. Content within on the level of the Self, we feel confident and capable. Life's dualities (success and failure, ups and downs, progress and reversal, starts and stops) and the distracting fear of undesirable outcomes lose influence. Actions feel natural, purposeful and right. We enjoy performing them. The harmony between outer actions (lower self) and nonactive inner contentment (higher Self) strengthens union between the two.

Repeated acts of selflessly serving others' desires strengthen union of bounded self within unbounded Self. Optimism rules. Possibilities pop out of the woodwork. Actions feel spot on. Outcomes become more easily attained. Harmony between inner contentment and outer activity strengthens. In the groove of service, we increasingly identify with unbounded inner contentment of Self. In time, we fully identify with inner contentment. Union of bounded lower self within unbounded higher Self stabilizes. We '*cast away the bondage of karma*' (2.39) and become established in union, established in Yoga (following verse).

Here, Krishna emphasizes one's control over actions, not their fruits, advocating selfless right actions for evolution. In the following verse, he instructs Arjuna to perform actions with a balanced mind, rooted in the equilibrium of higher Self, defining this state as Yoga, showcasing the harmony between inner contentment and outer activity.

Balanced mind and skillful action:

Overview:

Where desires and actions interweave to form the fabric of our lives, a balanced mind and skillful action offers a pathway to inner peace and fulfillment. This principle, illuminated in the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, speaks to the heart of achieving harmony between our inner world and our outer actions.

At the core of this teaching lies the idea of union — Yoga — the harmonious union of lower self with higher Self. The lower self, with its ceaseless desires and restless actions, often seeks fulfillment in the external world, where

success and failure, pleasure and pain dominate the landscape. In contrast, the higher Self resides in a state of unbounded inner contentment, unaffected by external circumstances.

Krishna advises that to achieve a balanced mind, one must become established in Yoga, where actions are performed without attachment to their outcomes. A mind that is neither elated by success nor distressed by failure characterizes this equilibrium. Instead, the mind remains steady, rooted in the deep inner contentment of the higher Self.

Imagine a skilled archer. Her focus is not merely on hitting the target but on the grace and precision of her movements. Her mind is calm, her actions deliberate and her focus unwavering. In this state, success and failure become mere outcomes of a process driven by inner balance and skill. This is the essence of performing actions with a balanced mind — where the quality of the action itself is paramount, not the result it produces.

The practice of Karma Yoga, or selfless action, plays a pivotal role in achieving balance of mind. By serving others' desires and innocently renouncing our own, we break free from the cycle of impression-desire-action that binds us to the material world. Each act of selfless service turns the mind inward, aligning it with the unbounded contentment of the higher Self.

In daily life, this translates to performing duties without being swayed by the lure of rewards or the fear of failure. Whether setting the table for a family meal or engaging in our professional responsibilities, the key is to put attention on action itself, performed to the best of our ability, without getting entangled in the potential outcomes.

This approach brings about a profound shift. As we practice selfless service — Karma Yoga — our actions begin to flow naturally and effortlessly, guided by an inner sense of rightness. The mind, freed from the distractions of desire, finds its equilibrium. This inner stability, in turn, enhances our ability to act skillfully, furthering our spiritual and material wellbeing.

Krishna's teachings underscore that those who act solely for the fruits of their actions miss the essence of true fulfillment. Such actions driven by selfish motives, inferior in quality, leave one perpetually dissatisfied. Instead, seeking refuge in the intellect — self identifying with the higher Self — allows us to act from a place of inner clarity and purpose.

A balanced mind leads to skillful action, not as a conscious effort but as a natural consequence of being aligned with the higher Self. This state of Yoga

brings forth effective and inherently fulfilling actions, performed from a place of inner contentment and peace.

In essence, the journey to a balanced mind and skillful action is a journey inward. Recognizing and cultivating the unchanging contentment within allows it to guide our actions. By doing so, we transcend the dualities of success and failure, pleasure and pain, and discover a profound sense of harmony and fulfillment in everything we do. This is the true meaning of Yoga — a balanced mind and skillful action, unified in the pursuit of higher purpose and inner peace.

2.48. Having abandoned attachments and become established in Yoga, perform actions balanced in success and failure, Arjuna. Balance of mind is called Yoga.

'Established in Yoga,' established in union (previous verse).

Balance of mind arises from the equilibrium of contented higher Self. *'Established in Yoga,'* the contented higher Self permeates lower self's mental faculties of imagination, will, feelings, thoughts, and actions. Spontaneous right actions centered in cardinal virtues (2.45) dominate; the field of potential outcomes hold little sway. Unmindful of outcomes, we inherently perform *'actions balanced in success and failure.'*

The key to achieving balance of mind lies in the union of lower self within higher Self. This union is called Yoga. Therefore, we can say that balance of mind is called Yoga.

Krishna advises Arjuna to find balance in Yoga, and perform actions with a mind established in the contented higher Self. Continuing in the following verse, Krishna warns that actions without balance lead to inferior outcomes. He urges Arjuna to seek refuge in the intellect, practice selfless Karma Yoga, and attain skill in action for spiritual growth.

2.49. *Far away from the balanced mind is action of inferior quality, Arjuna. Pity those who perform selfish actions for the fruits of action alone. Seek refuge in the intellect.*

For 'balanced mind' see previous verse.

'Far away from the balanced mind' lose foresight, direction and focus. Allow emotional attachments to gain sway, perform feeble and ineffective actions, and fail to achieve outcomes. Fritter away life on the horizontal plane. Unmindful of action's true purpose, stumble along life's dharmic path of evolution, at best.

'Pity those who perform selfish actions for the fruits of action alone,' bound to the ever-changing phenomenal world, trapped on the rollercoaster of dualities, numbed by the inevitable ups and downs of life, and caught off balance by twisting turns of fate. So attached to success and failure in acquiring 'fruits of action alone,' lose sight of the vertical plane and growth in spiritual wellbeing. Remain forever glued to the cycle of impression-desire-action, frustrated with lack of evolution, stuck in disappointment, and pitiful in action and outcome.

Quit the rollercoaster: act!

'Seek refuge in the intellect.' Practice Karma Yoga. Selflessly serve the desires of others. Follow dharma's compass heading (2.40). Innocently turn within through selfless action (2.45). Through the innermost cognitive function, the ego (intellect's subtlest quality), we identify with Absolute Self. In the equanimity of Self, gain balance of mind (previous verse). Perform right actions (2.47). In the fulfilling harmony uniting inner contentment and outer activity, experience inner strengths. Perform dynamic actions to further evolution and readily achieve outcomes.

In the following verse, Krishna emphasizes the shift from inferior actions to skillful ones. Renounce desires, let the intellect unite with the Self. In Karma Yoga, devotedly serve others' desires. Attain mastery in action, transcending the dichotomy of good and evil. This progression highlights the evolution from pitiful actions to the wisdom of selfless, skilled endeavors.

2.50. *Intellect united with the Self, cast off good and evil actions even here in this world. Devote yourself to the practice of Karma Yoga [to serving others' desires]. Achieve skill in action.*

From weak and pitiful actions (previous verse) to skilled actions (this verse).

To dismiss them, Krishna addresses the full range of action. Good (or right) actions in accord with dharma support evolution; evil (or wrong) actions in discord with dharma retard evolution (2.47). Through good actions prosper. Through evil actions suffer. All actions lie between the outer bounds of good and evil, between outcomes of prosperity and poverty.

Through the ego, the subtlest quality of intellect, realize the ultimate Reality and Truth: I am unbounded inner contentment of Self (previous verse). *'Intellect united with Self'* through the ego, live outside time, space and the entire range of actions and their consequences. Live in the unbounded contentment of Self.

'Devote yourself to the practice of Karma Yoga.' *'Be without the three Gunas'* (2.45). Be without involvement in action. Break bondage to action. Let nonaction of contented Absolute Self flourish. On the level of lower self (united in Self) perform right actions (2.47). Beyond action on the level of nonactive higher Self, naturally *'casts off good and evil actions even here.'*

In Cosmic Consciousness gain *'skill in action.'* Active lower self united in nonactive higher Self, live beyond attachments and dualities of loss and gain and the fear they engender. Active lower self united in Absolute higher Self, perform spontaneous, smooth and effective right actions to further evolution. This is *'skill in action'*: lower self in union with higher Self, actions based in nonaction, actions liberated from bondage to action, natural actions beyond concern for outcomes and consequences, actions balanced in success and failure, actions that achieve desired outcomes.

'Skill in action' is wisdom realized in action seeded by Nature's desire to further evolution (following verse).

Unite intellect with the Self, transcend good and evil actions. Devote yourself to Karma Yoga, serving others' desires. Attain skill in action, harmonizing with Nature's evolutionary intent. In the following verse, the wise naturally renounce desire through selfless actions, establish intellect in the Self. They need no fruits from action; liberated from rebirth, aligned with Nature's harmonious flow.

Wisdom — acting on Nature's desires:

Overview:

Wisdom guides action. In the heart of wisdom lies an ancient understanding, a principle that beckons us to align our actions with Nature's desires. This alignment is not merely an act of compliance but a harmonious engagement with the primal forces that drive evolution and growth. To act on Nature's desires embraces a path that leads to inner contentment and liberation from the endless cycle of impressions, desires and actions.

Nature, in its primal essence, represents a fundamental force more profound than mere desire. It is the feminine aspect of existence, often personified as Mother Nature, whose desires spark actions that further evolution and promote the greater good for all. In this context, all actions inspired by Nature are right actions. They arise spontaneously, supported by Nature herself, and lead to the enhancement of wellbeing and happiness.

The wise, established in the inner contentment of the higher Self, do not seek the fruits of their actions for personal gain. Happiness for them emanates from within, from a contented Self that is detached from the outcomes of actions. This detachment does not imply a lack of enjoyment of the fruits but rather an experience that these fruits are not the result of personal desire but of Nature's desires. The wise recognize that desires, when aligned with Nature, lead to actions that naturally support the greater good and further evolution.

In this liberated state, actions become spontaneous and right, inspired by Nature's desires. Such actions are not motivated by personal gain but by a natural inclination towards the welfare of the world. The wise, by serving others selflessly, find happiness within themselves. Their intellect, untangled from delusion and attachment to past and future, resides in the present, achieving the essence of Yoga, or union of our outer and inner realms.

This state of being is described as having a steady intellect, one that is absorbed in the Self. When the ego, the subtlest quality of the intellect, identifies with the contented higher Self, inner contentment infuses feelings, thoughts and actions. This infusion leads to a serene and balanced state of being, where strong emotions lose their grip, and the individual remains undisturbed by external circumstances.

Krishna's teachings highlight the importance of acting in harmony with Nature's desires. He emphasizes that by sacrificing personal desires and performing selfless actions, one achieves a steady intellect and inner peace. This sacrifice of desire is not a deliberate effort to control the mind and senses but a natural consequence of serving others' desires — practicing Karma Yoga.

In summary, wisdom involves acting on Nature's desires, leading to spontaneous right actions that support evolution and promote the greater good. It is a journey of aligning with the primal forces of Nature, finding inner contentment and achieving liberation from the cycle of impressions, desires and actions. This path leads to a state of eternal peace, free from suffering, where actions are guided by the harmonious flow of Nature's desires.

2.51. Having renounced desire and established intellect in the Self, the wise do not need fruits born of their actions. Liberated from the bondage of rebirth they live eternally in a state free from suffering.

Serve others' desires and innocently renounce your own. '*Having renounced desire*' no longer search for happiness in attractive qualities found in objects of sensory experience (2.39, 2.45).

Desires renounced, attention follows dharma's compass pointing toward increased happiness experienced at finer levels of awareness. Having reached finer levels of awareness deep within, the ego identifies with unbounded contentment of Absolute Self. Through ego, intellect establishes itself in desireless Self (2.47).

From whence desires? The intellect established in "desireless" Self, the mind operates on Nature's desires.

About Nature: Nature drives the primal force of evolution. Nature shapes the fundamental aspect of creation and influences all activities governed by the three Gunas (attributes of Nature). Integral to the Gunas and action, Nature propels the Gunas towards growth and increase. Nature is the opposite of entropy, but stronger than it. Entropy is difficult to define. So too Nature.

In following verses, I refer to Nature as "Nature's desire" for increase in wellbeing, though in fact, Nature is more primal than "desire" and such a description oversteps Nature's primal character, of which for lack of a better term is the feminine aspect of existence. Hence, Mother Nature.

Since Nature's desires spark actions to further evolution, all actions are right actions (2.47). We spontaneously act in accord with Nature and consequently, Nature supports our actions to achieve the greater good for all. Wise indeed.

Established in inner contentment of higher Self, '*The wise do not need fruits born of their actions*' to achieve happiness. Happiness comes from contented Self deep within (2.66). The wise still enjoy fruits of action. But in fact, '*the wise*' did not desire fruits. Those desires came from Mother Nature.

Rebirth signifies being strapped to the cycle of impression-desire-action. The wise, liberated from this cycle of bondage to action, achieve liberation by separating higher Self from Nature's desires and the actions of the lower self, freeing them from cycles of bondage to action, that is, endless cycles of impression-desire-action. Liberated from bondage, the wise live eternally in a state free from suffering. Their actions inspired by Nature's desires, lead to spontaneous right actions that enhance happiness and further evolution. *'Liberated from the bondage of rebirth [the wise] live eternally in a state free of suffering,'* in a state where Nature's desires spark spontaneous right actions.

The wise, renouncing desires innocently by selflessly serving others' desires, find happiness in the Self. Freed from bondage, they live in contentment. A steadfast intellect, untangled from delusion, transcends Vedic teachings; indifferent to past and future, they reside in the present, achieving the essence of Yoga (following verse).

2.52. When your intellect crosses the thicket of delusion, you will be indifferent to that which is yet to be heard and to that which has been heard [in the Vedas].

Surrender to Nature's desires (previous verse). Naturally cast away the pull of past and future to achieve happiness. Live in the present.

When the ego identifies with the unbounded Absolute Self, intellect and mind cross over the '*delusion*' of looking "out there" to some future or past event for happiness and contentment.

Fulfilled, desireless and wisely acting on Nature's desires to further evolution (previous verse), *'that which is yet to be heard and that which has been heard'* in the Vedas fails to spark interest in Vedic action. On the contrary, living in a state of wisdom where Nature's desires spark spontaneous right actions underscores happiness and furthers evolution (previous verse), *'All the Vedas are of no value than is a small well flooded by water on every side.'* (2.46).

When the intellect stands unwavering in the Self, disregarding Vedic doctrine, one attains Yoga (union of lower self in higher Self). In the following verse, a steadfast intellect, absorbed in the Self, naturally disregards Vedic doctrines on action, achieving union (Yoga) by aligning with the higher Self.

2.53. *When your intellect stands steadfast in the Self, disregarding Vedic doctrine, then you shall attain to Yoga.*

Your intellect '*stands steadfast in the Self*' when its subtlest quality, the ego, identifies with the ultimate Reality and Truth (2.50): I am Absolute contented Self. In uniting with higher Self, the lower self turns to higher Self (2.45), '*disregarding Vedic doctrine*' on action (previous verse). We '*attain to Yoga*' (union) and act on Nature's desires to further evolution (2.51).

When your intellect stands steadfast in the Self, disregarding Vedic doctrine, then you shall attain to Yoga. Arjuna asks Krishna how a person with steady intellect absorbed in the Self speaks, sits, and moves (following verse).

2.54. Arjuna asks: *How does a man of steady intellect absorbed in the Self speak, sit and move?*

'*Intellect* [becomes] *absorbed in the Self*' when the ego — intellect's subtlest quality — identifies with unbounded Self during acts of selfless service. In earlier verses, Krishna described the underlying psychological properties of Yoga (fulfilled, virtuous, balanced, discerning, skilled, wise, indifferent to the Vedas, steadfast in the Self: 2.45 – 2.53) and raised Arjuna's curiosity about the outward appearance of a man whose intellect is '*absorbed in the Self*.'

How does he express himself? Do pearls of wisdom fall from his lips?

How does he appear at rest? Is his countenance peaceful?

How does he appear in action? Does he move with fluidity and grace?

There is no universal answer to these questions because it is the unique personality of the lower self that performs all actions. Given the vast diversity in outer appearances among individuals, their distinctive traits and circumstances, Krishna answers in terms of inner nature. In '*steady intellect absorbed in the Self*' achieved during selfless service to others — the practice of Karma Yoga — one rises above selfish desires and emotional attachments (2.55 – 2.56). In the remainder of this chapter, Krishna raises the bar above '*steady intellect*' and describes inner nature in terms of '*established intellect*' — Cosmic Consciousness — verses 2.57 – 2.71.

Here, Arjuna asks Krishna how a person with steady intellect absorbed in the Self speaks, sits and moves. Krishna responds, stating that by casting off desires deep within the mind and finding contentment in the Self alone, one gains a steady intellect (following verse).

Steady intellect:

Overview:

The practice of Karma Yoga offers a path to achieving a steady intellect, a state of mental equilibrium and clarity that is essential for spiritual growth. This practice, deeply embedded in the essence of selfless action, allows us to transcend our mundane desires and align our actions with a higher purpose.

Steady intellect arises when one casts off desires embedded deep within the mind, finding contentment in the Self alone. This state is achieved in the practice of Karma Yoga, where selfless service to others takes precedence over personal gains. By serving the desires of others, we renounce our own, thus breaking free from the cycle of impression-desire-action that binds us to the material world.

Imagine the mind as a ship on a turbulent sea, easily carried away by the winds of sensory pleasures and material desires. When we focus our intellect on selfless action, we anchor this ship, stabilizing it amidst the storm. The intellect steadies, and we begin to see beyond the ephemeral promises of happiness that sensory objects offer.

A person with a steady intellect is likened to a sage who remains undisturbed in misfortune, free from the desire for pleasures, and detached from extremes of excitement, fear and anger. This sage sees the desireless Self as separate from activity, acting in accordance with Nature's laws to further both spiritual and material wellbeing. Lower self in union with higher Self, the inner contentment of Self infuses lower self's feelings, thoughts and actions, creating a serene and balanced state of being.

In the state of steady intellect, strong emotions lose their grip. Contentment, sourced from the Self alone, overcomes attachments and aversions. This contentment leads to an established intellect, where the mind is anchored in the unbounded nature of the higher Self, unaffected by the fluctuations of the outer world.

A person with established intellect experiences life's ups and downs with equanimity, neither overly rejoicing nor deeply saddened by external events. This state of Cosmic Consciousness allows one to witness life's ebb and flow without being swayed by it. Like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, the person with established intellect effortlessly withdraws the senses from their objects, finding inner peace and stability.

The practice of Karma Yoga thus transforms our actions from being driven by personal desires to being guided by a higher purpose. By serving others' desires, we align our actions with the natural flow of life, experiencing spontaneous right actions that support our spiritual and material growth. This alignment brings about a state of eternal peace, free from suffering, where we perform actions without attachment to their outcomes.

In summary, achieving a steady intellect involves spontaneously renouncing personal desires and finding contentment in the Self when selflessly serving others' desires. This practice of Karma Yoga leads to inner peace, balance of mind and a deeper connection with the higher Self. It is through selfless service that we transcend the limitations of the material world, realizing the true source of happiness within and achieving steady intellect.

2.55. Krishna responds: *Having cast off desires deep within the mind, content in the Self by the Self alone, one gains steady intellect.*

When we serve others' desires, we innocently renounce our own (2.45). Consequently, we transcend jittery waking state consciousness. Intellect steadies. We '*cast off desires deep within the mind.*' The cycle of impression-desire-action begone (2.45). Desires no longer grip the mind, destabilizing it by dragging it out into the ever-changing material world promising happiness in objects of the senses.

Contentment is single-sourced to the Self, '*by the Self alone.*' The ego — the subtlest quality of intellect — identifies with contented Self. Out of equilibrium of Self's inner contentment, '*steady intellect.*' In the Transcendental Consciousness of steady intellect, inner contentment infuses feelings, thoughts and actions. Some of it sticks.

In this verse, Krishna responds, stating that by casting off desires within the mind and finding contentment in the Self alone, one attains a steady intellect. In the following verse, a sage with steady intellect is described as free from anxiety during misfortune, devoid of desire for pleasures and detached from extremes of excitement, fear, and anger.

2.56. *He whose mind is free from anxiety when experiencing misfortune, whose desire for pleasures has disappeared, whose attachment to passion, fear and anger have departed, he is a sage of steady intellect.*

A sage — a wise person who acts according to Nature's Laws governing evolution — sees the desireless Self as separate from activity and acts on Nature's desires (2.51) to further spiritual and material wellbeing.

In the gentle equilibrium of fulfilling inner contentment of Self (previous verse) we remain '*free from anxiety*' and unmoved by '*desire for pleasures*' gained in the material world. Strong emotions lose their grip. Content deep within, '*attachment to passion, fear and anger*' lose sway. Such is a '*sage of steady intellect*,' absorbed in the rock-solid contented nature of Absolute higher Self.

Having experienced one's inner nature, established intellect dawns out of steady intellect (following verse).

Established intellect:

Overview:

Imagine a life where the tumultuous waves of emotions and desires no longer dictate your actions. This state of serene equanimity, referred to as "Established Intellect," offers a glimpse into a profound inner peace rooted in the higher Self. Here we explore this concept, emphasizing how one can achieve unwavering contentment and unshakable tranquility.

The Essence of Established Intellect: An individual with an established intellect does not sway between the highs of pleasure and the lows of pain. Instead, one remains anchored in the vast, unchanging ocean of the Self. We achieve this state not by mere suppression of desires but through a profound transformation where the allure of sensory objects loses its grip. The intellect, once established in the higher Self, effortlessly maintains a calm, even demeanor amidst life's vicissitudes.

Detachment and Inner Contentment: Detachment does not imply a lack of engagement with life but a different kind of interaction. A person with an established intellect naturally interacts with the world without being entangled by it. Like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, one pulls back his senses from external distractions, finding fulfillment within. This withdrawal is not forced but a natural consequence of discovering a deeper source of happiness within the Self.

The Metaphor of the Tortoise: The metaphor of a tortoise withdrawing its limbs perfectly illustrates this concept. When a person withdraws their senses from the objects of desire, they protect the mind from the chaos of external influences. This detachment marks the hallmark of established

intellect, where the mind becomes an island of tranquility, undisturbed by the ebbs and flows of sensory experiences.

Cosmic Consciousness and Equanimity: Established intellect is synonymous with Cosmic Consciousness, where one experiences life without the turbulence of desires and aversions. In this state, distinctions between waking, dreaming and sleeping blur, as the individual remains in a constant state of inner fullness. The fluctuations of the outer world no longer disturb the serene calm of self united with Self.

Overcoming the Turbulent Senses: The turbulent senses overpower even the most discerning minds. Krishna's guidance to Arjuna emphasizes the importance of naturally controlling the senses by serving others' desires — the practice of Karma Yoga. This Self-control is not about resisting desires but about outshining them with the inner contentment of the Self. When the ego identifies with the higher Self, the intellect becomes established, and the mind naturally remains centered and calm.

The Path to Inner Peace: Attaining established intellect requires a shift from seeking happiness in external objects to finding it within. This inner peace eradicates the roots of sorrow, establishing the intellect in its true discerning role. Serving others through selfless action helps overcome attachments to sensory objects, further solidifying this inner peace. When desires no longer drive actions, and the mind remains undisturbed, true contentment and happiness emerge.

Conclusion: The concept of established intellect offers a roadmap to a life of profound tranquility and unwavering contentment. By anchoring lower self's mind in the higher Self, detaching from sensory allure, and achieving inner peace, one navigates life's challenges with equanimity. This state of being, where the intellect is firmly established in the Self, not only brings personal fulfillment but also aligns actions with the greater good, fostering harmony and evolution.

2.57. He who has no attachments, neither overly rejoicing nor deeply saddened on gaining what is pleasant or unpleasant, his intellect is established.

'He who has no attachments' (previous verse).

'His intellect is established' who permanently identifies with unbounded, desireless, nonactive, and Absolute higher Self. Established intellect anchors the mind in the ever-full ocean of contented Self. Actions fail to make deep

impressions on the mind and seed desires and actions anew (2.39). In fulfilling contentment of higher Self, objects of the senses lose their allure. 'He who has no attachments' to objects of the senses lives in quiet inner awareness of outer experiences (2.51).

Established intellect is Cosmic Consciousness. Conscious awareness remains uninvolved with activity, both cognitive and physical. Distinctions between activities of waking, sleeping and dreaming disappear. We live in the evenness of unbounded contentment of rock-solid Self, '*neither overly rejoicing nor deeply saddened on gaining what is pleasant or unpleasant.*'

Life flows of its own accord. Ups and downs blend into each other. Thoughts and actions mesh without effort. Things get done in the groove of service.

This verse introduces an individual with an established intellect, rooted in unbounded contentment. This Cosmic Consciousness maintains equanimity. In the following verse, the metaphor of a tortoise withdrawing its limbs signifies detachment from external attractions.

2.58. When he completely withdraws his senses from their objects, as a tortoise withdraws limbs into its shell, his intellect is established.

The tortoise's limbs (senses) withdraw from connecting the tortoise (mind) with the outer world of sensory experiences.

For one not established in intellect, desires drag the mind out into attractive qualities of objects sensed. On the other hand, the '*intellect established*' in the Self (previous verse), inner contentment precludes the need to find happiness in objects of the senses. No longer in demand to experience happiness, the senses lose their grip on the mind. *Sans* the senses grip, the mind is an island unto itself in a Self-same sea of contentment. It is as if '*He completely withdraws his senses from their objects, as a tortoise withdraws limbs into its shell.*'

Here, Krishna describes a person with established intellect who, like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs, disengages from the allure of sensory objects. This withdrawal from sensory attachments is further explored in the following verse, emphasizing the gradual cessation of the taste for sensory pleasures upon realizing the Supreme Truth.

2.59. *Objects of the senses turn away from those who abstain from them, but the taste for them remains. Upon seeing the Supreme Truth even this taste ceases.*

Through the senses, desires drag the mind, intellect and ego into ever-changing sensory experiences (previous verse). But when we serve others' desires — practice Karma Yoga — we naturally renounce our own desires for gaining happiness in objects of the senses.

In steady intellect gained in serving others, the mind no longer '*feeds*' upon objects of the senses through desire. For one with steady intellect, it is as if the '*objects of the senses turn away from those who abstain from them.*' But until intellect establishes itself in the Self (2.57), '*the taste for them remains.*' That is, the objects still have their waxing and waning allure. Upon actually '*seeing the Supreme Truth*' of omnipresent Self detached from objects, '*this taste ceases.*'

Here, serving others' desires in Karma Yoga helps overcome attachments to sensory objects. However, without the intellect established in the Self, the taste for sensory objects persists. The turbulent senses, mentioned in the following verse, can overpower even a discerning individual who strives to resist their influence.

Control — the art of Self-control:

Overview:

Control, often misconstrued as a rigid imposition of will, is redefined in the light of inner contentment and Self-awareness. This redefinition is not about suppressing desires or forcefully restraining the senses but about transcending the fleeting allure of external objects and finding a steadfast anchor within the Self.

Consider the ocean, vast and serene, its surface occasionally ruffled by waves but its depths remaining calm and undisturbed. Our inner Self mirrors this ocean. When we center ourselves in this profound tranquility, the turbulence of desires and the pull of sensory objects lose their overwhelming grip. Instead of being swayed by every external stimulus, we find a steady source of joy and contentment within.

Imagine walking through a bustling market. The colors, sounds and scents captivate your attention, drawing you towards the enticing displays. Yet, if you carry within you a sense of fulfillment, contentment and inner peace,

these attractions, while pleasant, do not dictate your actions. You appreciate them without feeling compelled to possess them. This is the essence of Self-control — not the absence of desires but the freedom from being dominated by them.

Krishna's teachings illuminate this path. He emphasizes that when the mind is disciplined by the inner contentment of Self, the senses naturally fall into harmony. It is not about waging a battle against our sensory perceptions but about cultivating a deeper satisfaction that outshines the temporary pleasures offered by the external world. This inner satisfaction acts as a guiding star, leading us to make choices aligned with our highest intentions.

Picture a skilled sailor navigating stormy seas. The sailor does not attempt to control the waves but instead steers the ship with a steady hand, using the principles of navigation and understanding of the sea's behavior. Similarly, when we anchor ourselves in the Self, — the self established in Self, or Yoga — we navigate life's challenges with a steady intellect and balanced mind. The waves of desire and emotion may come, but they do not dictate our course.

This balanced approach is not a denial of the sensory world but a mastery over it. When we engage with the world from a place of inner fullness, our actions become expressions of our deepest truths rather than reactions to external pressures. We find that our desires align more closely with our higher purpose, and our actions become naturally right and beneficial.

In the end, Self-control is about freedom. It is the freedom to act from a place of inner strength rather than being driven by external forces. It is the mastery that comes from understanding our true nature and living in harmony with it. This path of inner contentment and Self-awareness offers a way to navigate life with grace, achieving a balance that brings lasting peace and fulfillment.

2.60. The turbulent senses forcibly carry away the mind, Arjuna, even of the astute man who strives to resist them.

The senses fall under the control of their objects “out there” and take on their turbulent quality. Through desire, the senses connect the mind to its objects of desire (2.58). Thus, ‘*The turbulent senses forcibly carry away the mind, even of the astute man who strives to resist*’ being caught up in their turbulence.

A discerning nature and resistance is not enough to bar being forcibly carried away. Rather, a more stable force effortlessly “controls” the senses from within (following verse).

2.61. *Having controlled the senses, disciplined, let him sit united in the Self, his attention on Me as Supreme; for he whose senses are controlled, his intellect is established.*

Established intellect brings the senses under control by outshining their alluring objects. When the ego — the subtlest quality of intellect — identifies with higher Self it becomes established in the Self (Practice makes perfect, 2.47). Thus, the lower self — of ego, intellect and mind — sits ‘*united in the Self*’ and takes on its Absolute unbounded nature.

Fulfilling inner contentment of Self outcompetes fleeting happiness “sensed” in alluring objects (2.39). Ego, intellect and mind are ‘*disciplined*’ and ‘*controlled*’ by inner contentment of Self, rather than the other way around where attractive qualities found in objects of the senses discipline and control mind, intellect and ego. Through inner contentment, steady intellect and balance of mind overcome ‘*turbulent senses*’ (previous verse).

‘*His attention on Me as Supreme.*’ Previous verses attested to the inadequacies of selfish desire and petitionary Vedic action to further evolution. [‘*All the Vedas are of no more value than is a small well flooded by water on every side*’ (2.46). ‘*You will be indifferent to that which is yet to be heard and to that which has been heard [in the Vedas]*’ (2.52). See also verses 2.42 – 2.44.]

Q: So where do we turn to gain deeper knowledge of Self? Ans: to ‘*Me as Supreme.*’ For He alone is someone to whom the seeker can turn.

This verse discusses achieving Self-control over the senses through Self-discipline and sitting united in the Self. The following verse explores the chain of attachment, desire and anger, emphasizing the destructive consequences of unchecked emotions and the importance of Self-control for happiness.

Anger — the loss of Self-control:

Overview:

“Be not quick to anger for anger lies in the bosom of fools.” — *Ecclesiastes*

Anger is a potent force, one that often arises unexpectedly, seizing control of our rational faculties and leaving a trail of discord in its wake. Desire births anger. When our desires are thwarted, anger steps in, a forceful response to unmet expectations.

The journey to anger begins innocently enough. We ponder on the objects of our senses, be it a coveted possession, a relationship or an aspiration. This contemplation leads to attachment; we feel a connection to these objects as if they were extensions of our very selves. From this attachment, desire is born — a yearning for the pleasure and satisfaction we believe these objects provide.

But desire is a double-edged sword. When our actions to achieve these desires fail, frustration brews and anger erupts. Anger is not merely a transient emotional state; it engulfs the mind, distorting reality and creating a false narrative to justify its presence. This narrative, rich in delusion, convinces us of our right to be angry and fuels the flames even further.

As anger intensifies, it leads to a cascade of negative consequences. Delusion arises, clouding our judgment and severing our connection to the truth. This delusion results in the loss of memory, where our grasp on reality becomes tenuous. We remember events not as they happened, but as our anger dictates they should have happened. This distorted memory further erodes our intellect, the faculty that discerns right from wrong, reality from illusion, the paved path forward from the muddy mire.

Without the guiding light of a clear intellect we lose our way, unable to navigate the complexities of life with wisdom and discernment. Our actions, now driven by a distorted sense of self and reality, lead us into further turmoil. Anger, once a reaction to an unmet desire, becomes the architect of our downfall, steering us away from the path of inner peace and harmony.

To combat anger, we must disengage from desire by serving others' desires. By Self-disciplining our mind and moving among sensory objects without attachment or aversion, we attain a state of inner peace. This peace is the antidote to the chaos that anger brings. The art of Self-control: when our lower self is controlled by the higher Self, we move through life liberated from the attractions and aversions that once held sway over us.

In this state of liberation, our desires no longer give rise to anger. We attain peace, a profound inner tranquility unaffected by external circumstances. This inner peace eradicates sorrow and establishes our intellect firmly in the truth of our higher nature, higher Self. It is through this Self-control that we

achieve lasting happiness, a state where the mind is steady, the intellect sharp and the heart serene.

In conclusion, anger is not an isolated emotion but a symptom of a deeper disconnection from our higher Self. By understanding its roots in desire and attachment, and by spontaneously renouncing desire when serving the desires of others, we overcome its destructive influence. In doing so, we restore balance to our lives, reconnect with our higher Self and walk the path of true happiness and inner peace.

2.62. From pondering on objects of the senses, attachment. From attachment, desire. And desire gives rise to anger.

Looking for happiness outside ourselves, we risk setting off the chain reaction of attachment, desire and anger. '*From pondering on objects of the senses*,' we become attached to the object's attractive qualities. '*From attachment, desire*' to experience lasting happiness the object promises. '*Desire gives rise to anger*' when our actions to find lasting happiness in the object fail to meet expectations.

This verse explains the chain reaction: pondering on sensory objects leads to attachment, which births desire. Unfulfilled desire gives rise to anger. In turn, anger begets delusion, leading to loss of memory, destruction of intellect and ultimately, perishing for one lacking discernment (following verse).

2.63. From anger arises delusion; from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory, destruction of intellect; from destruction of intellect, he perishes.

Anger opens the floodgates of delusion. We see our world through the lens of the false reality we create to justify angry feelings. Our delusional narrative is so wonderfully intoxicating, we disengage from harmonious rhythms of life and the steady course forward along our path of evolution.

Memory breaks loose from fact. '*From delusion loss of memory*.' We make things up to support our delusional narrative. Imagination outcompetes reality. The difference between what happened and what we imagine having happened confuses us on the nature of reality.

Logic and common sense whirlpool down the drain. Based on false and fanciful input and loss of memory, intellect has an unstable factual basis and dysfunctions. Properly functioning intellect discerns what is real and true. Dysfunctional intellect loses power of discernment.

'Destruction of intellect' leaves us adrift. Without means to correct course and steer around life's reefs, and across its shallow and stormy seas, we flounder on the hard rocks of a delusion-based ignorance. We embrace enchanting ignorance with open arms. Disaster ahead. Having abandoned life's natural rhythms, *'he perishes'* in his pursuit of higher levels of spiritual and material wellbeing.

Anger is identified as the offspring of desire. The following verse asserts that disengagement from desire and anger leads to inner peace. By disciplining the mind among sensory objects without attachment or aversion, one attains peace and freedom from sorrow.

Happiness:

Overview:

Practice Karma Yoga. Serve others' desires, spontaneously renouncing your own. The mind turns within to our inner source of peace and happiness

In the quest for happiness, one may find themselves endlessly chasing external pleasures, only to realize the fleeting nature of such temporal satisfaction. True happiness, as revealed through serving others' desires, is not bound to transient experiences but resides within the Self, detached from the whims of sensory pleasures.

Happiness, in its purest form, stems from a profound state of inner peace. We attain this peace by disengaging from desires and anger, and by Self-control over the mind and senses (2.61). Practice Karma Yoga. When the mind is undisturbed by external stimuli and remains anchored in the Self, one experiences contentment that external pleasures can never provide.

The pursuit of sensory pleasures leads to a cycle of temporary happiness followed by inevitable dissatisfaction. These pleasures, born of contact with the external world, are transient and ultimately become sources of pain. The enlightened, understanding the impermanence of such pleasures, seek contentment within, finding enduring happiness in the equanimity of the Self.

Self-control (2.61), therefore, is not merely about abstaining from desires but about aligning one's actions and thoughts with the higher Self. When the senses withdraw from their objects, akin to a tortoise retracting its limbs, the mind finds stability. This stability fosters an inner peace foundational to true happiness.

Without peace of mind, there can be no happiness. The restless mind, constantly seeking external gratification, fails to find lasting contentment. True happiness emerges from a mind at peace, from Self-control and from a steady and discerning intellect. This inner peace protects the mind from attachments and aversions, leading to a state of perpetual contentment.

Thus, the journey to happiness is not about accumulating external pleasures but about discovering and nurturing the inner peace that lies within. By practicing selfless service and aligning one's actions with the higher Self, one transcends the temporary allure of the sensory world and attains a state of enduring happiness.

2.64. But having disengaged from desire and anger, disciplined and moving among objects of the senses, liberated from their attractions and aversions, and under his own control [Self-control], he attains inner peace.

In union, lower self takes on the contented nature of higher Self and is disciplined and controlled by it (2.61). The lower self infused with fulfilled higher Self, no need for selfish desire and consequently, no anger is born ('*desire gives rise to anger*,' 2.62).

'*Under his own control*,' that is, lower self naturally controlled by higher Self (Self-control, 2.61), he moves '*among the objects of the senses, liberated from their attractions and aversions*.' Liberated in the higher Self's full and unbounded nature, lower self casts away attachments, possessions and the need to possess. Having detached from stormy outside influences, '*he attains inner peace*.'

By disengaging from desire and anger, Self-disciplined individuals, liberated from sensory attractions and aversions, achieve inner peace. This inner peace eradicates sorrows, establishing intellect in discerning one's true nature and fostering lasting happiness (following two verse).

2.65. Through inner peace comes an end to all sorrows; from inner peace the intellect becomes established.

Ending sorrow is a matter of Self-control. Mind, intellect and ego controlled by the senses, there is always risk of sorrow from losing something dear. But the Self-controlled (2.61) run no risk of sorrow. Unbounded inner peace leaves no room for loss, sorrow, sadness, and distress induced by outside influences (previous verse). Absorbed in inner peace, intellect becomes

established in its role to discern our Real and True nature, which is, in fact, happiness born of peace of mind (following verse).

Inner peace ends sorrows and establishes the intellect. The following verse questions the possibility of happiness without peace of mind. The verse emphasizes Self-control, where the union of lower self with higher Self brings stability, allowing for a steady mind and true happiness.

2.66. No Self-control, no intellect, no steady thought, no peace of mind; for one lacking peace of mind, can there be happiness?

This verse brings the previous two to a happy conclusion.

In union, individual aspects of lower self (ego, intellect, mind) come under the control of contented Absolute higher Self (2.61). However, lacking union, these aspects of lower self fall under the control of the ‘*turbulent senses*’ (2.60). Lacking union of lower self within higher Self, there is ‘*no intellect, no steady thought, no peace of mind*’ operating in their roles to steer us along our dharmic path (2.40).

There is no ‘*steady thought*’ in minds endlessly searching for happiness and consequently, ‘*no peace of mind*.’ ‘*For one lacking in peace of mind, can there be happiness?*’ How can there be happiness when the mind flits about searching for it “out there?” Only when we realize inner contentment of higher Self can we achieve steady thought, peace of mind and naturally experience happiness from within.

Peace of mind comes not from overtly controlling it. Instead, by serving others’ desires, we achieve peace from within by uniting lower self within higher Self (2.45), eliminating the draw of turbulent senses and their tempestuous nature to rough us up.

This verse emphasizes that without Self-control (2.61), intellect, steady thought, and peace of mind remain elusive. Only by achieving control through inner peace, gained by serving others’ desires and uniting with the higher Self, can one experience true happiness. This Self-control prevents the mind from being carried away by the senses, allowing for established intellect and lasting happiness (following verse).

Withdraw senses from their objects:

Overview:

We often find ourselves swayed by the allure of sensory pleasures. We chase fleeting moments of joy, allowing our senses to dictate our actions, much like a ship carried away by the wind on turbulent waters. Yet, wisdom tells us that true happiness lies not in the external but within the steady calm of our contented higher Self. We realize this profoundly simple insight by serving others' desires.

When the mind follows the wandering senses, it gets caught in a whirlwind of desires, attachments and inevitable disappointments. The intellect, supposed to be our guiding light, is instead carried away, much like a ship without an anchor. In this state, we are at the mercy of external circumstances, our peace of mind constantly disrupted by the ebb and flow of sensory experiences.

The journey to inner peace begins by naturally withdrawing the senses from their objects by serving others' desires — and therefore renouncing our own. This withdrawal of desires and the senses they direct is not an act of suppression but a gentle redirection of attention inward. Just as a tortoise draws its limbs into its shell for protection and stillness, we too draw our senses inward to find the sanctuary of the Self. This act of turning inward through the practice of Karma Yoga — serving others' desires — allows the mind to become an island of tranquility, undisturbed by the chaotic pull of external stimuli.

Initially, the taste for sensory pleasures remains. This residual craving is natural, reflecting the deep-seated habits of the mind. However, by serving others' desires and establishing intellect in the higher Self, these desires gradually lose their grip. This Supreme Truth of the power of inner contentment, once realized, reveals the transient nature of sensory happiness and at the same time, the eternal, unchanging happiness of contented Self.

The senses are naturally turbulent, often overpowering even the most discerning individuals. Resisting these senses through sheer willpower is like trying to stop a storm with one's bare hands. Instead, true mastery comes from a deeper experience and alignment with the Self. When the self's intellect is firmly established in the higher Self — when self unites with Self — the senses naturally withdraw, much like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs. This state of steady intellect is not about rigid control but about effortless mastery born from inner contentment realized by serving others' desires, that is, by Self-control (2.61).

In this state of inner contentment, the mind no longer seeks happiness in external objects. The allure of sensory pleasures diminishes, and the mind rests in the unbounded contentment of the Self. This profound inner peace, born from the withdrawal of senses and the establishment of intellect in the higher Self, brings about true happiness. It is a happiness not swayed by external circumstances but rooted in the eternal contentment of the Self.

The metaphor of the tortoise withdrawing its limbs extends beyond a mere withdrawal from sensory objects. It signifies a deeper journey towards inner peace and self-realization. As the senses withdraw, the intellect shines brighter, guiding the mind to the profound truth of our existence. This inner journey, marked by the withdrawal of senses and the establishment of intellect, leads to a life of balance, contentment and lasting happiness.

Thus, the practice of withdrawing senses from their objects — the practice of Karma Yoga in serving others' desires and innocently renouncing our own — is not a denial of the sensory world but a reorientation of our priorities. It is about finding the unchanging essence within the ever-changing external world. By grounding ourselves in the higher Self through the practice of Karma Yoga — serving others' desires — we navigate life with a steady mind, free from the turbulence of desires and attachments. In this state of inner harmony, we experience the true essence of inner peace and happiness.

2.67. When the mind follows the wandering senses, the intellect is carried away by the senses as a ship is carried away by wind on water.

'The turbulent senses forcibly carry away the mind' (2.60). When the weak mind becomes absorbed in enjoying an object's attractive qualities "out there" in the relative field of life, it loses the inclination to find lasting happiness deep within (previous verse). Regardless, the mind naturally appeals to the intellect to discern Reality and Truth in the relative, where there is neither. The higher Self loses "control" of ego, intellect and mind to the senses. The senses exert the turbulent influence of the relative on mind, intellect and ego. Consequently, as the mind is carried away by the turbulent senses *'the intellect is carried away by the senses as a ship is carried away by wind on water.'*

This verse describes how the mind, when following the senses, gets carried away like a ship by the wind. In contrast, the following emphasizes that one with withdrawn senses, akin to a tortoise retracting its limbs (2.58),

establishes steady intellect. This withdrawal contributes to inner peace and happiness (following verse).

2.68. *Therefore, Arjuna, he whose senses withdraw from their objects, his intellect is established.*

This verse deepens the metaphor of 2.58, ‘as a tortoise draws in his limbs.’ There the focus was on established intellect. Here the focus is on the end game of happiness, where ‘*Therefore*’ takes us back to 2.66: ‘*how can there be happiness?*’

The senses latch onto their objects through the desire for the happiness attractive qualities found in them promise. Thus, through the mind, ‘*the intellect is carried away as a ship by wind on water*’ (previous verse). But finding a greater source of happiness deep within, the senses ‘*withdraw from their objects.*’ We find this greater source of happiness only when ‘*his intellect is established*’ in the unbounded contentment of Self, that is, in the union of lower self within higher Self, wherein reside peace of mind and resultant happiness (2.66).

This verse emphasizes withdrawing senses from their objects, deepening the metaphor of a tortoise withdrawing its limbs. This withdrawal leads to an established intellect. The Self-controlled, grounded in the Self, remains awake in the night for all beings, contrasting with the wakefulness of those who are bound to desires and attachments (following verse).

Live Cosmic Consciousness:

Overview:

In the heart of our existence lies the profound concept of Cosmic Consciousness. This state of awareness transcends the boundaries of ordinary perception, allowing us to glimpse the divine order underlying the universe. It is a journey from the superficial to the sublime, from the fleeting to the eternal, and it beckons us to align our actions with a higher purpose. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, particularly in the discourse on Karma Yoga, illuminate this path.

To live in Cosmic Consciousness is to achieve a harmonious union of the lower self within the higher Self. The lower self, with its ceaseless desires and restless actions, often seeks fulfillment in the transient pleasures of the material world. These desires tether us to a cycle of action and reaction,

where satisfaction is elusive and fleeting. In contrast, the higher Self is a state of unbounded contentment, untouched by the vicissitudes of life. In this state we find true peace and fulfillment.

Krishna's teachings in the *Gita* guide us towards this higher state of being through the practice of Karma Yoga — selfless action naturally performed without attachment to the fruits of actions. By serving others' desires and therefore, renouncing our own desires and the selfish actions they seed, we break free from the binding cycle of impression-desire-action. This practice turns our attention inward, revealing the inner source of true happiness.

Consider the simple act of helping a friend in need. On the surface, this may appear as a mundane task, but when performed with the spirit of selfless service, it becomes a profound exercise in Karma Yoga. The focus shifts from personal gain to the happiness and wellbeing of others. In this shift, the mind begins to detach from its own cravings and desires, moving towards a state of inner peace.

Living in Cosmic Consciousness we maintain awareness during all states of being — waking, dreaming and sleeping. This continuous awareness allows us to witness our desires, thoughts and actions from a place of inner contentment. We begin to see desires and actions as fleeting waves on the surface of the mind, while our true Self remains serene and unperturbed in the depths.

Imagine the serene depths of the ocean. The surface may be turbulent with chop and waves, but deep beneath, the water remains still and undisturbed. Similarly, in the state of Cosmic Consciousness, the outer experiences of life — success and failure, happiness and sorrow — do not disturb the inner tranquility of our deeper depths. This inner stillness brings about a balanced mind, where we perform actions skillfully and spontaneously, in harmony with the greater cosmic order.

Krishna advises that by practicing Karma Yoga — by serving others' desires selflessly — we achieve a state of liberation from the binding effects of action. This liberation is marked by a steady intellect and contentment that is unaffected by external circumstances. The wise, who have naturally relinquished desires and immersed their intellect in the Self, find eternal liberation from the cycle of impression-desire-action.

In this wisdom, actions are aligned with Nature's desires, transcending the pursuit of personal gains. The spontaneous practice of right action leads to spontaneous, life-supporting acts that are inherently harmonious with life.

This path of selfless service not only promotes individual wellbeing but also contributes to the overall harmony and balance of the world.

Therefore, living in Cosmic Consciousness is not about retreating from the world but engaging with it from a place of inner fulfillment. When our actions are driven by this inner peace, they feel effortless and right. This state of being is action in accord with Nature, where our actions further evolution and promote the greater good.

In conclusion, Cosmic Consciousness invites us to transcend the limitations of ordinary perception and align our lives with a higher purpose. By practicing selfless service to others and maintaining steady awareness during all states of being, we break free from the binding cycle of desire and action, discovering a profound state of inner peace and fulfillment. This journey from the transient to the eternal, from bondage to liberation, reveals the divine order underlying all existence, guiding us towards a more enlightened and harmonious existence.

2.69. The Self-controlled remains awake in that which is night for all beings. On the other hand, the time in which all beings are awake is the night for the sage who sees.

The realized and unrealized experience wakefulness differently. The realized is eternally awake in the light of the Self, experiencing separation from activity. The unrealized is awake to desire, delusion, attachments, binding influence of action, wavering intellect, and unsteady thought.

'Self-controlled' refers to verse 2.61: in union, the contented Self infuses lower self with inner contentment and in this subtle way, controls ego, intellect and mind.

The 'Self-controlled' experiences the contented nature of the Self through the intellect established in it (2.57). The light of contentment shines through all activities, whether in states of waking, sleeping, or dreaming. '*The Self-controlled remains awake [to the contented nature of Self] in that which is night for all beings.*' That is, when unrealized beings sleep in the night, the realized remains awake on the level of the Self.

On the other hand, the unrealized remains awake to the fleeting satisfaction of objects of the senses. The sage of established intellect sees this state of bounded wakefulness as merely the darkness of ignorance. '*The time in which all beings are awake is the night for the sage who sees.*' Thus, relative

to experiencing the bright light of the Self, wakefulness of the unrealized is pitch black as the darkest night *'for the sage who sees.'*

This verse describes the contrasting wakefulness experienced by the realized and unrealized. The Self-controlled, eternally awake in the Self, contrasts with the unrealized, awake to desires and the fleeting satisfaction of sensory objects. Desires are fulfilled for those with an established intellect, where all desires enter the mind like waters entering an undisturbed sea (following verse).

2.70. He for whom all desires enter the mind as waters enter the full and undisturbed sea attains peace, and not he who longs for objects of desire.

For those whose intellect is established in the Self the purpose of all desires has been achieved: union of lower self absorbed in unbounded, eternally lasting inner contentment of Absolute higher Self. The bright light of Self shines through the intellect, illuminating the mind. Desires are already fulfilled in contentment of Self. *'All desires enter the mind as waters enter the full and undisturbed sea'* of inner contentment.

On the other hand, for the man *'who longs for objects of desire'* each desire is vitally important and carries the heavy burden of necessity. *'My happiness depends on achieving this very desire!!!'* The pressure is on. He sees bondage to action as the way things get done and the means to happiness. That is, bondage is a good thing. For *'he who longs for objects of desire'* is bound to his actions to experience their transient measure of happiness. Deluded, he lives in the dark night of ignorance (previous verse).

The individual with an intellect established in the Self experiences desires as waters entering a full sea, attaining peace. The liberation of a person who abandons all desires, acts without longing, and lives free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine,' achieving inner peace and contentment (following verse).

2.71. When a man abandons all desires and acts without longing, he lives independent of the sense of 'I' and 'mine.' He attains inner peace.

Detached from desires, *'a man abandons all desires and acts without longing'* because he — the lower self of ego, intellect, mind, senses — lives absorbed in the contented higher Self (previous verse). Desires still occur on the surface of the mind. But these are Nature's desires to further evolution (2.51) and there is no sense of 'I' and 'mine' associated with them. Liberated!

Happiness (2.66), the purpose of all desires and actions, has been achieved (previous verse). Hence, there is nothing to long for. [See also 2.45, '*free of possessiveness, possessed of the Self.*']

This verse describes the liberated state where one abandons desires, acts without longing, and lives independent of the sense of 'I' and 'mine.' Krishna asserts that this state is Cosmic Consciousness, bringing freedom from delusion. Attaining this in life, even at death, leads to eternal freedom and happiness (following verse).

2.72. This is Cosmic Consciousness, Arjuna: freed from delusion and established in this, even in the hour of death, he attains eternal freedom in eternal happiness.

'*This is Cosmic Consciousness*' refers to the attributes Krishna describes in verses 2.57 – 2.71. Also see Table 1: States of Consciousness in a Nutshell.

Quiet and content deep within, we witness desires on the surface of the mind and the organs of action act. Intellect '*established in this*' inner peace of Self, we abandon desires and longing, achieve indifference to the sense of '*I*' and '*mine*' and gain '*liberation from delusion*' of looking "out there" for happiness in objects of the senses.

Peace of mind puts an end to anxiety, sorrows, sadness, and distress. Happiness flourishes. We experience quiet inner awareness of contented Self during waking, sleeping and dreaming. Always and forever established in the inner peace of Self, '*even in the hour of death, he attains eternal freedom in eternal happiness.*'

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 3 — Experience Sacrifice of Desire

Brahman — the creative principle for all existence — is forever established in sacrifice of desire.

Commentary on Ch 3 verses 1 - 43:

Paths:

Overview:

Paths are not merely the routes we take but the choices we make, the actions we undertake and the principles we uphold. They define our journey and our growth, guiding us through the intricate dance of life and evolution.

In the heart of this journey lies a crucial understanding: not all paths are the same. They differ in their demands, their challenges and their destinations. The ancient wisdom speaks of two primary paths to enlightenment — one of contemplation and one of action. These paths, though distinct, share a common goal: the realization of the higher Self and the fulfillment of our highest potential.

The path of contemplation, or Gyan Yoga, for those inclined towards introspection and understanding, involves turning inward, studying the Self, and seeking wisdom through meditation and reflection. This path requires a quiet mind and a still heart, where the seeker finds clarity and peace in the depths of their own consciousness.

On the other hand, the path of action, or Karma Yoga, is for those who find meaning in their acts. It is the path of the householder, the person engaged in the world, who seeks to serve others selflessly. This path teaches that through selfless service, one transcends the limitations of egoism and connects with the divine. It is about naturally performing one's duty with dedication and subsequent, abandonment of results.

These paths might seem opposed — one seeking Nature's wisdom in stillness, the other in action. Yet, they converge in their ultimate aim. Both paths lead to the same destination: the union of the lower self with the higher Self, or Yoga. The contemplative and the active both strive to overcome the bondage of desires and the illusions they create. Whether through deep

thought or selfless action, the goal is to align oneself with the eternal truth — the Self — that lies within.

Krishna's wisdom illuminates these paths, urging us to recognize the importance of our choices. He explains that abstaining from action does not lead to nonaction. True nonaction is not the mere absence of physical acts but naturally being detached from the fruits of those acts. It is about performing one's duty, letting go of personal gain and focusing on the greater good.

This teaching challenges us to rethink our approach to life. It suggests that renunciation is not about withdrawing from the world but engaging with it more meaningfully. By serving others and fulfilling our responsibilities, we purify our hearts and minds. This purification allows us to see beyond the superficial and connect with the deeper reality of the Self.

As we navigate our paths, we encounter moments of decision, where we must choose between the easy way and the right way. These are the forks in the road, the pivotal points that shape our destiny. The right path often demands courage, integrity and a willingness to serve something greater than ourselves. It requires us to act with wisdom and compassion, guided by the light of our higher Self.

Ultimately, the journey on these paths is not solitary. We walk alongside fellow travelers, each on their own journey, yet interconnected by the shared pursuit of truth and enlightenment. Our paths may differ, but our destination is the same: the realization of our divine nature — the Self — and the fulfillment of our highest potential.

In the end, it is not the path itself that defines us, but how we walk it. The sincerity, dedication and love we bring to our journey shape our experiences and our growth. By embracing the path of renunciation or the path of action with an open heart and a clear mind, we align ourselves with the divine order and find true fulfillment in our lives.

3.01. Arjuna asks: *If you consider understanding superior to action, then why encourage me to engage in this terrible deed of war?*

Because Lord Krishna emphasized understanding in the previous chapter, Arjuna naturally sees the pursuit of understanding as superior to action. The notion of pursuing understanding alone gives Arjuna hope he is on the right track and can avoid battle. Consequently, Arjuna asks, *'Why encourage me to engage [to act] in this terrible deed of war?'*

Arjuna questions the value of understanding compared to action. Krishna responds in verse 3.03, introducing the paths of contemplation (Gyan Yoga) and action (Karma Yoga).

3.02. Arjuna continues: *Your opposed statements confuse my intellect. Tell me surely this one thing: how shall I reach the highest good?*

Something is missing from Krishna's teaching and Arjuna cannot put his finger on it. Intellectual understanding (previous chapter) has been insufficient to assuage his confusion, dithering and unhappiness. Yet, Arjuna cottons to the idea of ridding himself of his troubling issues through understanding alone (previous verse). Stumped, he needs Krishna to distinguish between paths of understanding and action — and set him on the right path. *'Tell me surely this one thing: how shall I reach the highest good?'*

In the following verse, Krishna introduces two ancient paths to liberation from action: Gyan Yoga for contemplatives and Karma Yoga for men and women of action. These two paths aim to achieve common goals: Yoga (union of lower self within higher Self), liberation from action and happiness in Cosmic Consciousness (2.72).

3.03. Lord Krishna responds: *As set forth by Me in ancient times, there are two paths, Arjuna: Yoga of pursuing understanding for men of contemplation and Yoga of action for men of action.*

The *'Yoga of pursuing understanding for men of contemplation'* and the *'Yoga of action for men of action'* were *'set forth'* in ancient times by no less than Me and have withstood the test of time.

'Men of contemplation' achieve renunciation of action by overtly resisting desire and restraining from acting in the extroverted world of social interactions. They turn attention inward through mental activity of quiet study and contemplation — Gyan Yoga, the recluse path (3.05).

'Men of action' take action to serve others' desires, innocently renouncing their selfish desires and the actions those desires seed — Karma Yoga, the path of action, the householder's path (3.05, 3.08).

The following verse underscores the necessity for action, whether through mental contemplation or physical deeds, to achieve union of lower self within higher Self.

3.04. *Not from abstention from action does a man attain nonaction. And not by renunciation alone does he approach Perfection.*

Practitioners of Yoga (previous verse) cannot escape action. The '*man of contemplation*' prefers mental action (Gyan Yoga). The '*man of action*' prefers physical action to achieve outcomes (Karma Yoga). Both courses of action achieve union of lower self within higher Self.

'*Nonaction*' is the experience of Self separate from action.

'*Renunciation alone*' is the state of Cosmic Consciousness where the Self finds itself '*alone*.'

In '*Perfection*' Brahman infuses all action (3.15).

'*Abstention from action*' does not achieve nonaction. Far from it. At its core, abstention from action is still action.

And not by renunciation alone does he approach Perfection. '*Renunciation alone*' is the state of Cosmic Consciousness. When we live in '*renunciation alone*,' Nonactive Absolute higher Self witnesses active lower self in action.

Here, Krishna explains that abstaining from action doesn't lead to nonaction and renunciation alone doesn't bring perfection. In the following verse, He asserts that existence involves continuous action, driven by the Gunas of Nature. Action, whether mental or physical, is inherent and essential, as the Gunas propel everyone to engage in activity, if for no other reason than to survive.

Action:

Overview:

Action is an essential part of life, a force propelling us forward that shapes our destinies and molds our character. It is through action that we interact with the world, make our mark and strive towards our goals. However, the true essence of action goes beyond mere activity; it lies in understanding and acting upon the deeper significance and the underlying motives that drive us.

From the moment we wake up, a series of actions engulf us. These actions can range from mundane tasks like brushing our teeth to more profound endeavors such as pursuing a career or nurturing relationships. Each action, no matter how trivial, is intertwined with our thoughts and desires. It is this intricate relationship between action and intention that defines our journey.

Krishna's teachings remind us that action is inevitable. To survive, we must act. Even the simplest activities, like eating or breathing, require action. Therefore, the notion of escaping action is an illusion. What truly matters is how we engage in these actions. Are we driven by selfish motives, or do we act selflessly, considering the welfare of others?

The practice of Karma Yoga, or the Yoga of action, emphasizes performing one's duty. This approach to action liberates us from the bondage of expectations and desires. When we act selflessly by serving others' desires, our actions become offerings to the divine, aligning us with our higher Self. This spontaneous detachment from the fruits of our actions brings about inner peace and contentment, allowing us to act with clarity and purpose.

Consider the analogy of a gardener tending his plants. The gardener's primary focus is on nurturing the plants, providing them with water, sunlight and care. The gardener does not anxiously await the blooming of flowers or the bearing of fruits. Instead, joy resides in the act of gardening itself, trusting that the plants will flourish in their own time. Similarly, when we engage in actions without being preoccupied with outcomes, we find fulfillment in the process itself.

Krishna's counsel to Arjuna on the battlefield highlights the importance of duty. Arjuna is torn between his role as a warrior and his aversion to the impending bloodshed. Krishna advises him to perform his duty as a warrior. This teaching underscores that true excellence in action arises not from the act itself but from the intention behind it. When actions are performed with duty, selflessness and devotion, they transcend the mundane and become the path to spiritual growth.

In the face of success or failure, pleasure or pain, we remain steady, grounded in our higher Self. This balance of mind, achieved through the practice of Karma Yoga, allows us to navigate life's challenges with grace and poise. It is this inner stability that enables us to perform our duties effectively, benefiting not only ourselves but also those around us.

Krishna's example of continuous, unwearied activity serves as an inspiration. He emphasizes that even though He is beyond the need for action, He engages in it for the welfare of the world. This selfless dedication sets a high standard for us to follow. By acting for the greater good, we contribute to the harmony and wellbeing of society.

In conclusion, action is an inescapable aspect of life, but it is the nature of our actions and the intentions behind them that define our spiritual journey.

By embracing the principles of Karma Yoga and performing our duties — serving others' desires with selflessness — we align with our higher Self, attain inner peace and contribute positively to the world. We all know this: true fulfillment lies not in the results of our actions, but in the purity of our intentions and the joy of selfless service.

3.05. Indeed, not even in the twinkling of an eye can one exist without performing action. The Gunas born of Nature drive everyone to action.

Action begins when functioning ego manifests out of pure consciousness. At this point, the experiencer, that experienced and the process of experiencing come into being. This is the beginning of action manifesting out of pure consciousness, the unmanifest field of all possibilities. Hence, all reality born of action — ice cream, turtles, stars, kitchen cabinets, thoughts — is action born of ego. [For a deeper dive into the trilogy of experience and the role of ego, see verses 7.04 – 7.12.]

All action takes place in the present. There is no measure of time short enough to exclude the present. *'Indeed, not even in the twinkling of an eye can one exist [survive] without performing action.'*

By contemplating Nature's subtle laws, the Gyan Yogi transcends the most refined level of ego through revelation. Awareness of the finest level of creation cannot be achieved on the level of thought because the act of thinking overshadows awareness of creation at a level finer than contemplation. Consequently, the Gyan Yogi can only experience the transcendental beginning of action from outside the experience trilogy. In seeing the Truth of Reality through contemplation — simultaneously realizing its transcendent and relative aspects — the Gyan Yogi transcends action through revelation. Revelation is the "aha" moment where intellectually understanding the experience trilogy merges with experience of it. Thus, the Gyan Yogi sees the Truth of the Self separate from action through revelation.

Relative to the practice of Karma Yoga, this revelatory means to transcend ego, the most refined level of intellect, is indirect and contingent on culturing a refined nervous system. Consequently, the practice of Gyan Yoga requires a reclusive lifestyle — restrictive diet, quietude, celibacy, reliance on a master's teaching — to help settle the nervous system and support '*contemplation*' of Nature at the most refined level of the mind. The reclusive lifestyle is a tough row to hoe for men and women of action.

For the Karma Yogi, transcending ego is directly accomplished through action alone (2.45). Anytime. Anywhere. Serve others' desires and instantly

transcend your own selfish desires and the actions they seed. *'Be without the three Gunas,'* be without involvement in action by simply acting to serve others' desires and experience nonaction on the level of the Self, which is beyond ego and action.

In the following verse, Krishna criticizes restraint, calling it hypocrisy.

3.06. *He who sits restraining his organs of action while dwelling on objects of the senses, self-deluded, he is a hypocrite.*

In choosing restraint, one chooses the horizontal plane of selfish action and numbs oneself to the joys of selfless action in service to others, accomplishment and evolution.

He who wastes precious time on restraint while dwelling on objects of the senses is delusional. Restraint is selfish action — albeit mental action — of self-control inspired by a poorly understood concept of desireless nonaction, which is readily achieved in sacrificing our desires for others' desires. Regardless of intention, actions of restraint are actions all the same and keep us in bondage to action (2.39). Therefore, he who believes the self-delusion that *'restraining his organs of action while dwelling on objects of the senses'* achieves liberation from action is untrue to himself. Duped, he fails to practice what he preaches. *'He is a hypocrite.'*

In the following verse, He advises controlling the senses with the Yoga of action. He encourages action without attachment, advocating the union of lower self within higher Self. This mastery leads to excellence in the Yoga of action.

3.07. *But he who controls the senses by the mind alone, Arjuna, and without attachment engages the organs of action in the Yoga of action, he excels.*

Yoga means union and the *'Yoga of action'* is action taken in union of lower self within higher Self (2.45). Self-control: in union, the mind (of lower self) becomes infused with unbounded contentment of higher Self (2.61), and hence, controlled by it. In this way, the higher Self gains control of the mind, which controls the senses, which guide the organs of action to achieve outcomes. Actions based on unbounded Absolute higher Self, he gains skill in action (2.50). *'He excels.'*

Krishna advises controlling senses through the mind in the Yoga of action. Transitioning to the following verse, He emphatically instructs Arjuna to perform duty without attachment, declaring action's superiority to inaction. Krishna urges Arjuna to act unselfishly.

Do your duty:

Overview:

Duty provides a guiding light, illuminating the way with clarity and purpose. Duty, in its essence, is more than a mere obligation; it is a profound commitment to act in alignment with our highest values and responsibilities.

Imagine a captain steering his ship through turbulent seas. The waves crash against the hull, and the wind howls, but the captain remains steadfast. His duty is clear: to navigate the ship and ensure the safety of all on board. Similarly, in our lives, we captain our own ship, entrusted with duties that demand our unwavering attention and effort.

Duty calls us to action, to step beyond the confines of personal desire and embrace a larger purpose. It is through the performance of duty that we engage in the practice of Karma Yoga, the Yoga of selfless action. By fulfilling our responsibilities with dedication, we align with the higher Self.

Consider the sun in the sky. It rises and sets each day, providing light and warmth to all living beings. The sun does not seek recognition or reward for its efforts; it simply performs its duty, sustaining life on earth. In the same way, we are called to perform our duties selflessly, serving others and contributing to the greater good.

When we do our duty, we align ourselves with the natural order of the universe. Just as the planets follow their orbits, guided by the laws of physics, we too are guided by our inherent nature. Acting contrary to our duty disrupts harmony and leads to confusion and frustration. It is akin to swimming against a powerful current, exhausting ourselves without making progress.

Krishna, in His timeless wisdom, emphasizes the importance of duty by asserting that even He engages in action, despite having nothing to gain from it. His actions serve as an example for all humanity, illustrating that duty is the foundation of a well-ordered and prosperous life and society. If Krishna, who embodies perfection, performs His duty without attachment, how much more essential is it for us to do the same?

Performing our duty requires us to rise above selfish inclinations and act for the welfare of others. By focusing on our responsibilities and the needs of those we serve, we dissolve the barriers of selfishness and experience the joy of contributing to something greater than ourselves.

The essence of duty is captured in the simple yet profound directive: "Do your duty." This call to action transcends time and place, resonating with individuals across cultures and generations. It is a reminder that our lives gain meaning and purpose through the fulfillment of our responsibilities.

In the practice of Karma Yoga, duty becomes a path to liberation. By performing our duties with a sense of devotion, we free ourselves from the bondage of desire and action. This liberation is not an escape from action but a transformation of our relationship with it. We engage in our tasks with a serene mind, unaffected by the highs and lows of success and failure.

So, in moments of doubt and hesitation, remember the wisdom of the ages: "Do your duty." It is through this simple yet profound practice that we find our true purpose and align ourselves with the divine flow of life.

*3.08. Do your duty! Act! Act, for action is indeed superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of your body could not be accomplished without action.**

Q: How to engage the organs of action in the 'Yoga of action' (previous verse)? What specific actions guarantee neither loss of effort nor obstacles to evolution (2.40). How to practice Karma Yoga and act without acting and achieve nonaction in action (2.45)? ... experience cardinal virtues blossom (2.45)? ... achieve fulfillment and render the Vedas as useless as a small well surrounded by water on every side (2.46)? ... instinctively perform right actions (2.47)? ... gain balance of mind (2.48)? ... achieve skill in action (2.50)? ... employ Nature's wisdom in all actions (2.51)? ... establish intellect in the Self (2.57, 2.58)? ... naturally control wavering senses by the Self alone (2.61) ... achieve Cosmic Consciousness?

Ans: 'Do your duty!'

Duty! In its simplicity lies its completeness. 'Men [and women] of action' fulfill purpose by taking action to meet responsibilities. Doing your duty to serve others' desires is all it takes to 'be without the three Gunas' (2.45). The rewards of evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing require nothing more than performing one's duty.

Putting others' needs first is what we do to fulfill purpose and responsibility. We serve others' desires by sacrificing our own. To sacrifice desire is to experience liberation from action and the flow of dharma. When we pitch in, we slip into the groove of life and evolution.

To do otherwise, act selfishly or slide into inaction, feels rough and out of step with evolution. Entropy gains the upper hand and the family of man falls into dysfunction. Success in action and evolution suffer.

The householder's path: In sacrificing desire, men and women of action perform duty and break the cycle of impression-desire-action (2.45). Self-purifying and comfortable, sacrificial actions enhance harmony between quiet inner awareness and outer activity, fostering evolution. Our good vibrations radiate to those we hold dear. Intellect steadies and readily becomes established in the Self. We spontaneously perform right actions supporting evolution. Content deep within, desires and actions run of their own accord.

This is the practice of Karma Yoga experienced through the householder's '*duty*': actions out of love and devotion fulfill dharma, serve the purpose of spiritual and material evolution, and reach '*the highest good*' for all, the exalted goal set by Arjuna in verse 3.02.

Take the path of least resistance. '*Act, for action is indeed superior to inaction.*' Choose the vertical plane. '*Do your duty!*' Meet your responsibilities. Act. Innocently sacrifice selfish desires and actions they seed. Act. Liberate yourself from action, achieve skill in action (2.50) and readily reach spiritual and material goals.

Or choose inaction and stumble along life's horizontal plane. Choose lethargy, idleness, dullness. Choose resistance, strain, indifference, and unhappiness. Choose inaction and fall in league with entropy. Get nowhere fast.

We partner with entropy *via* the cycle of impression-desire-action (2.39). We think of entropy as being played out in the physical world only, for example, the universe winding down. But the mind is entropic too, winding down from a state of happiness with an object of the senses to dissatisfaction with it. Since happiness lies not in an object but within ourselves, we go from the light of happiness found in an entropic object of desire to the darkness of dissatisfaction with it, getting stuck in cycles of impression-desire-action (2.39). How do we dissolve this psychological entropy? Serve others' desires. Break the cycle of attachment by letting the light of higher Self shine

through lower self (2.45). The light of Self steadies and strengthens with time. Do your duty: dissolve entropy in the light of happiness.

No duty, no action, no evolution to Cosmic Consciousness. *'Even the maintenance of your body could not be accomplished without action.'* Although self-evident, this sentiment underscores the notion that action is necessary to survive. Without surviving, no evolution to higher levels of spiritual and material wellbeing. Therefore, we must act to survive and evolve. The motivation to successful, sustainable and rewarding action on all levels of life? Ans: Do your duty!

Immediately following verses address renunciation of action through sacrifice of desire (3.09 – 3.10) and support of Nature in sacrificial actions taken (3.11 – 3.15).

* Krishna also addresses Arjuna's lack of military leadership. The first rule of leadership is to get out in front and lead by example. But primary to this, Krishna reminds Arjuna of a more fundamental rule. How do you get out in front and serve exemplar? Do your duty: sacrifice your selfish desires and serve the desires of those you lead. Through leadership we achieve "perfection" in action (3.20 – 3.26).

Sacrifice desire:

Overview:

Human beings are often driven by a relentless pursuit of desires. These desires, whether for material possessions, recognition, or sensory pleasures, bind us to cycles of action, leaving us perpetually unsatisfied. Yet, within this dynamic lies a profound opportunity for liberation through the sacrifice of desire.

When one abandons personal cravings and acts without longing, one finds a deep sense of contentment and inner peace, independent of the outcomes or possessions that usually dominate our pursuits.

Krishna teaches that the path to true happiness and fulfillment is not through the accumulation of external objects but through the sacrifice of selfish desires. This sacrifice is not a passive relinquishment but an active engagement in selfless service. By performing actions as a form of sacrifice, we align ourselves with a higher purpose, transcending the bondage to action that desire typically engenders.

The concept of sacrifice is woven into the very fabric of our being. From the dawn of creation, the principle of sacrificing personal desires has been embedded into our nature. It is an innate ability, a part of our spiritual DNA, bestowed upon us by the Lord of Creation. This inherent capacity for selfless action, or Karma Yoga, allows us to fulfill our duties and, in turn, achieve both spiritual and material prosperity.

When we act selflessly by serving others' desires, we nourish the subtle forces of Nature that, in return, support our endeavors and guide us toward the highest good. This reciprocal relationship underscores the interconnectedness of all life. By serving others' desires and sacrificing our own desires, we contribute to a cosmic harmony that benefits everyone.

Gratitude plays a crucial role in this process. By expressing gratitude for the gifts we receive from Nature and the divine, we strengthen our connection to higher powers. This gratitude helps us live in the present moment, freeing us from attachment to past actions or future outcomes. It cultivates a sense of inner positivity and contentment, anchoring us in the here and now.

Krishna emphasizes that without the sacrifice of desire, one cannot truly prosper. Taking the gifts of Nature without giving anything in return is akin to theft, a violation of the natural order that leads to spiritual impoverishment. Conversely, those who practice sacrifice of desire experience liberation from sin and the fulfillment that comes from aligning with divine will.

The righteous, who consume the remnants of their sacrificial actions, are freed from the sins that bind them to the cycle of impression-desire-action. In contrast, those who act out of selfishness, preparing food or seeking pleasures solely for their own sake, consume sin and perpetuate their bondage to desire.

Sacrifice of desire extends beyond individual actions to encompass the very process of creation. The rain that nourishes life is itself a product of sacrificial actions, linking the nourishment of beings to the selfless acts that sustain the universe. This interconnectedness highlights the importance of selfless service in fostering both spiritual and material growth.

Ultimately, all actions originate in Brahman, the eternal, unchanging reality that underlies all existence. By sacrificing our desires and engaging in selfless service, we align our actions with this primal creative force, infusing our lives with a sense of purpose and fulfillment that transcends the transient pleasures of the material world.

In this journey, sacrifice of desire is not a loss but a profound gain. It is through this selfless action that we achieve inner peace, contentment and a deeper connection to the divine. By letting go of our personal cravings and serving the greater good, we find the true source of happiness within ourselves, living in harmony with the universe and fulfilling our highest potential.

3.09. Aside from acts of sacrifice, this world is bound by action. Perform actions for the purpose of sacrifice, free from attachments.

Sacrifice of desire is an action unto itself, apart from all others and created for experiencing liberation from bondage to action.

Krishna uses ‘bound’ in two ways. First, we are bound to act because our survival depends on it: *‘Even the maintenance of your body could not be accomplished without action’* (previous verse). Second, when we look for happiness in objects of the senses — rather than sacrifice desire and find happiness within ourselves — we become bound to our actions to experience the lasting happiness those objects falsely promise (2.39).

‘Perform actions for the purpose of sacrifice, free from attachments.’ Make the sacrifice of desires by serving others’ desires your *raison d’être* for acting: practice Karma Yoga in *‘this world.’* When we sacrifice desire and act in service to others — a natural consequence of staying the householder’s path (previous verse) — we operate on the level of contented Self and free ourselves from attachments. The Self just is, eternal, *‘maintenance’* free, outside the field of action, and *‘free from attachments.’*

Krishna urges performing actions as sacrifices, freeing oneself from attachments: Do your duty!. He emphasizes that, aside from sacrifice of desire, the world is bound by action. In the following verse, the Lord of Creation, who created humankind along with sacrifice, declares that by sacrificing desires, one prospers and fulfills all desires.

3.10. Having created humankind along with Sacrifice [of desire], the Lord of Creation said: “By this Sacrifice you will prosper and fulfill all desires.”

Gifted by the Lord of Creation, sacrifice of desires comes naturally; it’s in our DNA. We were born to practice Karma Yoga: by simply serving others’ desires, you sacrifice your own selfish desires. The message is clear. By sacrificing desires, *‘you will prosper and fulfill all desires.’* It’s in your DNA.

But exactly how are prosperity and fulfillment of desires accomplished through sacrifice of desire? By gaining Nature's support in all endeavors (following five verses).

The Lord of Creation declares that through sacrifice of desire, we prosper and fulfill desires. In the following verse, Krishna explains that by sacrificial actions, individuals nourish the gods (subtle forces of Nature) and establish mutual nourishment between the gods and us, fostering the highest good for all and supporting evolution carried out by Nature.

3.11. *By sacrifice [of desire], you nourish the gods and the gods nourish you. By nourishing each other, you reach the highest good beneficial to all.*

Here, 'gods' are subtle forces of Nature that organize and govern the positive direction of evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing.

Team Evolution: We share responsibility with these gods to further evolution. The gods organize subtle laws of Nature and administer refined impulses of intelligence and energy to work out the mechanics of evolution. In selfless sacrifice of desires to serve others, we engage these refined impulses, give them purpose and direction and create a reality that furthers the spiritual and material evolution Nature presides over and the gods work out.

Through gratitude, we nourish the gods and the gods nourish us. We put trust in Nature and gods. In steady and established intellect, we hand desire and impulse over to them, optimizing their charter to support evolution and ours to carry out the actions they engender. Recognizing the god's existence and purpose through gratitude strengthens our shared bond to further evolution and in our recognition of their role, nourishes their creative powers to support our evolution.

Gratitude naturally directs attention to the present, eliminating attachment to objects of the senses and bondage to action. [Cicero, "Gratitude is the mother of all virtues": fortitude, prudence and discernment, justice, and moderation (2.45).] In the present, we feel positive, content and happy from within. To '*reach the highest good beneficial to all*' we bond with higher powers, gain skill to carry out actions and achieve the outcomes Nature supports to further evolution. Incorporating Nature's wisdom and the gods' organizational and administrative skills into our selfless actions sustains and nourishes us.

Harmony gained in working together ratchets up mutually beneficial nourishment: '*By nurturing each other, we reach the highest good beneficial*

to all.' That is, together, we put our collective shoulders to the wheel of cosmic purpose to enjoy the cosmos.

Here, Krishna explains that by sacrificing desire, individuals nourish the gods, fostering mutual benefit. In the following verse, He asserts that those who enjoy the gods' gifts without gratitude are akin to thieves, missing the essence of sacrificial action and denying themselves profound happiness and liberation from action.

3.12. *Brought into being by Sacrifice [of desire], the gods will truly bestow the enjoyments you desire. But he who enjoys their gifts without offering to them in return is a thief.*

This verse meets the Lord of Creation's declaration, '*By this Sacrifice you will prosper and fulfill all desires*' (3.10).

By sacrificing desire, we bring the gods into being to support Nature's purpose to further evolution (previous verse).

For men and women of action, *ex-post* offerings of gratitude win in a knockout punch over *ex-ante* petitionary offerings, that is, over petitionary prayer and Vedic offerings. Having sacrificed desire, '*The enjoyments*' you desire are, in fact, the ones Nature desires for you to further your evolution (2.51). Moreover, fulfilling Nature's desire is on the god's job description (previous verse). So, of course, '*Brought into being by Sacrifice [of desire] the gods will truly bestow the enjoyments you desire,*' that is, Nature desires for you to further spiritual and material evolution.

Fruits of actions are '*gifts*' from Nature and the gods and not our doing. To assume authorship of action and outcome is to deny the creative roles higher powers play. Without offering gratitude (previous verse) '*to them in return,*' we fail to provide nourishment which sustains them and us in our supportive roles to further cosmic purpose (previous verse).

A thief suffers his low level of consciousness, the worst punishment of all. Denying higher powers their due, the thief assumes authorship of desire, becomes bound to fruits of action and robs himself of the profound happiness liberation from action offers. Through thievery, he foregoes life in the present, fruits of action free from bondage, peace of mind, and happiness (2.66).

Transitioning to the following verse, Krishna contrasts the righteous, released from sin through sacrifice of desire, with the non-righteous preparing food for

selfish pleasure, condemning them as sinners for ignoring gratitude for gifts received.

3.13. *The righteous, who eat the remainder of Sacrifice, are released from sin. But the non-righteous, who prepare food for their own sake, they eat sin.*

The remainder of sacrifice of desire is liberation. By consuming liberation through action, we infuse the universal nature of higher Self into individual lower self and enhance union of self within Self. In union, lower self naturally performs selfless right action that support evolution (2.47). *'The righteous ... are released from sin.'*

The *'non-righteous'* perform selfish wrong actions to enjoy attractive qualities found in objects of the senses (2.47). They selfishly *'prepare food for their own sake.'* *'They eat sin'* born of thievery (previous verse), sentencing them to sinful wrong actions and bondage.

Krishna explains in the following that all actions originate in Brahman, the creative force arising from the imperishable, perpetually established in sacrifice. Sacrifice and Brahman are intricately woven into sacrificial desires and actions.

Born of Brahman:

Overview:

Life unfolds through an intricate tapestry of actions and sacrifices, all of which are intricately woven with the essence of Brahman. In every moment, the principle of Brahman serves as the foundation from which all actions emerge, sustain and eventually dissolve. This eternal cycle underpins the natural world, guiding the rhythms of life and the cosmos.

Brahman, the unchanging reality amidst the ever-changing universe, acts as the cosmic glue, holding together the diversity we perceive in the world. It is from Brahman that all actions are born, and to Brahman that they ultimately return. This understanding elevates our actions from mere physical endeavors to sacred acts of creation, nurturing and dissolution.

Consider the rain that nourishes the earth, enabling plants to grow and sustain life. This rain, essential for life, is itself a manifestation of the sacrificial act. It is produced through the natural processes governed by Brahman. The nourishment that rain provides leads to the flourishing of

beings, which in turn, continue the cycle of sacrifice through their own actions. Thus, every drop of rain, every bloom and every life form are an expression of the sacrificial acts born of Brahman.

In our own lives, the principle remains the same. Our actions, when performed for the desire of others, transcend ordinary existence. They become acts of sacrifice, offerings to the greater good and the cosmic order. When we act selflessly, we align ourselves with the eternal principles of Brahman, contributing to the welfare of all beings.

Sacrificing desire is a central theme in this understanding. Desire, which often binds us to the transient and the material, can be transformed into a force for good when offered up in the spirit of sacrifice. By relinquishing our personal desires and acting for the benefit of others, we partake in the divine cycle of creation and renewal. This act of sacrificing desire purifies our actions, making them expressions of the eternal truth of Brahman.

Krishna emphasizes that all selfless acts of sacrifice are born in Brahman and only result in good and increase. Whenever we sacrifice desire, we do so with the support of Brahman, thereby furthering our evolution in both spiritual and material realms. This eternal connection between Brahman and sacrifice underscores the importance of acknowledging Brahman as the source of all activity. By doing so, we infuse our actions with this primal creative force, fostering wellbeing and harmony in the world.

Understanding that all actions originate in Brahman and that “Brahman is eternally established in sacrifice of desire,” we realize that every act of sacrifice is a step towards liberation. This understanding transforms our perspective, enabling us to see the interconnectedness of all life and the divine play of action and nonaction. In this way, by seeing Brahman in all our actions, we gain familiarity with the eternal truth of creation and attain a state of inner peace and fulfillment.

In conclusion, embracing the concept of actions born of Brahman allows us to transcend the ordinary and partake in the divine dance of creation. By sacrificing our desires and acting selflessly, we align ourselves with the cosmic order, contributing to the greater good and advancing our own spiritual journey. This sacred understanding elevates our everyday actions, imbuing them with purpose and connection to the eternal essence of Brahman.

3.14. From nourishment beings manifest, from rain is produced nourishment, from Sacrifice comes forth rain and Sacrifice is brought into being by action.

This verse and the following drill down to the nature of sacrifice. Our sacrificial actions get the ball of creation rolling (this verse) and infuse Brahman into sacrificial acts (following verse).

Sacrifice of desire trumps petitionary Vedic offerings to produce rain, nourishment and beings. Born of '*action*' in sacrificing desire, intellect established in Self (2.57). Out of established intellect, '*rain*': renewal *via* Nature facilitating evolution (2.51). Out of '*rain*,' nourishment of gratitude to sustain the gods administering the laws of Nature acted upon by the Gunas (3.11). Out of the Gunas of Nature, '*beings manifest*' through functioning ego (3.05. 7.04). Clearly, '*Sacrifice*' of desire requires action; no action, no sacrifice.

In the following verse, Krishna affirms that Brahman is eternally established in sacrifice of desire, emphasizing the inseparable connection between sacrificial actions, the primal creative force, and the pursuit of spiritual and material evolution.

3.15. *Know all actions originate in Brahman. Brahman arises from the Imperishable. Therefore, all-pervading Brahman is eternally established in sacrifice* [of desire].

This verse and the previous drill down to the nature of sacrifice. Our sacrificial actions get the ball of creation rolling (previous verse) and infuse Brahman into those sacrificial acts taken (this verse).

Brahman is the creative upward-flow of increase out of the field of all possibilities, the cause of change that does not change, and the essence of the universe. Brahman is the Golden Glue underlying all, holding together all diversity in Oneness. This verse clearly states that Brahman is '*eternally established in sacrifice*.' That is, Brahman is present in all acts that sacrifice desire. To engage sacrifice of desire is to engage the primal creative force in the universe in our sacrificial acts.

'*Know all actions originate in Brahman.*' Brahman is the source of all activity and therefore, infuses all activity. '*Brahman arises from the Imperishable*' unmanifest field of all possibilities (Veda) that permeates and supports life and evolution and flows out of pure consciousness. All sacrifice of desire supports life and evolution and is born in Brahman arising from '*the imperishable*.' Therefore, Brahman infuses sacrifice of desire and enlivens those actions sacrifice of desire seeds to further evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing. Essentially, we sacrifice *with* Brahman, thereby easily

infusing Brahman — the primal creative force — into consciousness, feelings, thoughts, and actions.

Krishna asserts that all actions originate in Brahman, eternally established in sacrifice of desire. This sets the stage for the following verse, where neglecting duty and performing selfish actions disrupts the wheel of evolution. Without following the already set revolving wheel of sacrificial action, individuals live in vain, failing to align with the cosmic flow and hampering their spiritual evolution.

3.16. *One who does not follow the wheel set revolving, Arjuna, who performs sinful wrong actions, whose contentment lies in the senses, lives in vain.*

We propel a bicycle forward by downward and upward strokes of the pedals. Life evolves from one stage to the next, dissolving one by bringing the next into the moment. With each sacrifice of desire — each performance of duty (3.08) — we gain a more evolved state of life and in the process, destroy the previous, lesser-evolved one. Creative and destructive forces work in harmony, revolving the wheel of evolution forward along our dharmic path, maintaining balance and life moving forward.

Those who fail to perform their duty waste precious time and energy in straining to gain forward momentum. They lose harmony and balance. They lose Brahman's establishment in sacrificial actions (previous verse), which infuses selfless action with forward momentum, harmony, balance, evolution, and support of Nature.

'One who does not follow the wheel set revolving, who performs sinful wrong actions,' acts selfishly. Selfish acts retard evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing (2.47). Attempting to selfishly fulfill desires by vainly looking for fulfillment in attractive qualities found in objects of the senses we become attached (2.39). Attached, we cannot *'follow the wheel set revolving.'*

'Set revolving': 'Brahman arises from the Imperishable' (unmanifest field of all possibilities, previous verse). By sacrificing our desires to serve others' desires, we adopt sacrificial action already set in motion by Brahman. Just jump on, start peddling and *'follow the wheel [already] set revolving.'*

Without infusing Brahman into sacrificial actions (previous verse), we live in vain. We struggle to evolve. We spin away on the cycle of impression-desire-action.

Krishna advises following the already set wheel of evolution, emphasizing the importance of selfless action. Transitioning to the following verse, He describes the joyful state of one who delights in the Self, highlighting that such a person, content within, has no need for external actions to find happiness or fulfillment.

3.17. But the man who delights in the Self alone, whose source of contentment is the Self alone, for him the need to act does not exist.

In Self-awareness achieved by practicing Karma Yoga (2.45, 3.08), we live detached from desires and actions, in union of lower self within higher Self, experiencing contented higher Self. *'For him the need to act [to achieve happiness and contentment in objects of the senses] does not exist.'* Instead, happiness lies in peace of mind born of contented Self alone (2.66).

Here, self-delight brings contentment, rendering external actions unnecessary. In the following verse, Krishna asserts that neither action nor inaction serves a purpose when contentment lies in the Self. Happiness realized in Self-awareness transcends reliance on external beings or actions.

3.18. Neither action nor inaction has any purpose. And he has no need of any living creature for any purpose whatsoever.

'Neither action nor inaction' achieves happiness already realized in contented *'Self alone'* (previous verse). Happiness born of contented Absolute *'Self alone,'* does not rely on the actions of *'any living creature for any purpose whatsoever.'*

3.19. Therefore, do your duty. Perform action truly unattached and attain the Supreme.

'Do your duty' (3.08) and follow the *'wheel set revolving'* (3.16). Practice Karma Yoga and innocently sacrifice desires by serving the desires of those you are responsible for. Desires sacrificed, break bondage to action and the cycle of impression-desire-action (2.39). In this way, *'perform action truly unattached'* to desire, action and outcome. Infuse divine Brahman's sacrificial action into yours and so, *'attain the Supreme'* Brahman in your dutiful actions (3.15).

Krishna urges Arjuna to perform duty unattached, attaining the Supreme through selfless action. In the following verse, He explains that even wise

men follow their nature, emphasizing the futility of restraining natural tendencies. Understanding and accepting one's inherent qualities lead to spiritual progress.

Perfection gained from Right Action:

Overview:

Perfection is often seen as a distant, unattainable ideal, yet it can be reached through the simple, deliberate practice of right action. This idea is both profound and practical, reflecting a wisdom that has been acknowledged by sages and leaders throughout history. It suggests that true fulfillment and excellence arise not from extraordinary efforts or grandiose achievements, but from the execution of our everyday duties.

Consider the story of King Janaka, an ancient ruler who attained perfection through his actions. His story illuminates the principle that right action, performed selflessly and without attachment to the results, leads to a higher state of being. King Janaka did not seek perfection for its own sake; instead, he focused on serving his people's desires with dedication and integrity. Through his commitment to his duties, he infused his actions with a divine purpose, thereby achieving contentment and fulfillment.

This concept of right action hinges on the intention of Karma Yoga, which advocates for actions performed with a sense of duty: serving others' desires. In the practice of Karma Yoga, the act itself is its own reward, and the focus shifts from personal gain to the welfare of others. This shift in perspective transforms ordinary tasks into opportunities for spiritual growth and personal evolution.

To perform right action is to align oneself with a higher purpose of wellbeing for all. This alignment is not about renouncing the world or withdrawing from responsibilities. Instead, it involves a deeper engagement with life, where each action is seen as a step on the path to perfection. By dedicating our actions to the welfare of others, we transcend our individual limitations and connect with a greater whole.

Right action also brings about inner contentment, a state of being that is unaffected by external circumstances. When our actions are motivated by selfless service, we experience a sense of peace and satisfaction independent of success or failure. This inner contentment is the hallmark of a balanced mind, one that remains steady amidst the dualities of life.

Krishna's teachings underscore the importance of performing our duties with a spirit of selfless service. He advises that by focusing on our responsibilities, we can attain the Supreme: this practice of right action leads to a state of unwavering contentment, where the higher Self guides the lower self in harmonious union with it.

In this state of union, our actions become naturally aligned with the greater good: Brahman. We no longer act out of selfish desires or personal ambitions, but from a place of inner peace and clarity. This alignment with the higher Self brings about spontaneous, life-supporting acts that contribute to the overall harmony and balance of the world.

Thus, the path to perfection is not paved with extraordinary feats or monumental efforts. It is found in the simple, mindful execution of our everyday duties, performed with a sense of selfless service. By following this path of sacrificing desire through the practice of Karma Yoga, we achieve a state of inner contentment and contribute to the greater good, embodying the true essence of right action.

3.20. Perfection was gained by King Janaka and others by action alone. For the mere welfare of the world, you should act.

Sacrificial actions infuse Brahman primal creativity to support evolution into those performing them (previous verse; 3.15). In this way, 'by [sacrificial] *action alone*' to serve their subjects, '*King Janaka and others*' gained perfection of Brahman in their actions. Content in the Self by the Self alone left no room for doubt. Attaining '*perfection*' is no more complicated than that: '*Do your duty!*' (3.08); infuse Brahman into your actions; gain unwavering contentment; gain perfection (3.15).

Krishna admonishes Arjuna to rise above selfish individuality. Even if Arjuna merely stands up, he will sacrifice desire, rise above his cowardly confusion and infuse Brahman into his actions and gain '*Perfection.*'

Keep the welfare of others in mind. '*For the mere welfare of the world, you should act*' in service to others' desires and attain '*Perfection.*' This path '*King Janaka and others*' followed '*by action alone.*'

'*Action alone*' drives home the point of previous verses in this chapter. To gain higher states of consciousness, live the highest levels of spiritual and material wellbeing, and '*reach the highest good*' you do not need Vedic text, pundits, complex systems of philosophy, religious rites, pilgrimages, recluse lifestyle, obsequious obedience to a master. To put your best foot forward,

fulfill duty, nourish the gods, gain their favor, receive Nature's support, infuse Brahman into all action, follow the wheel set revolving, delight in the Self, gain perfection ... all you need is '*action alone*.' Act to serve others' desires. Transcend petty individuality. Stand up. Act! Fight!

Krishna asserts that perfection, exemplified by King Janaka, is attained through selfless action. This idea seamlessly connects to the following verse, where He emphasizes that a great individuals' actions set standards for the world. Serving others and infusing actions with Brahman, as exemplified by King Janaka, leads to perfection.

3.21. Whatever a great man does, so do the rest; the world follows standards a great man sets.

A great man serves others, Brahman permeates his actions, he achieves perfection, and sets a high example for others to follow.

Our actions influence others. Perform actions according to the high standards exemplified by great leaders (previous verse): '*Do your duty!*' (3.08). Serve others' desires, infuse Brahman into your actions, and shine the Divine light forward (3.15). Through your good example, help put a shine on others' actions and together, create a more abundant and just world (2.60).

Krishna emphasizes that exemplary individuals set standards, guiding the world. Linking to this, in the following verse, He asserts His own engagement in duty, underlining its importance for life's continuity. Together, these verses highlight the impact of virtuous actions, encouraging Arjuna to emulate such examples for the greater good.

3.22. For Me, Arjuna, there is no action in the three worlds I need do. Nor is there anything not attained to attain. Regardless, I engage in action.

'*I engage in action*.' This verse dispels the notion of The Creator as willing all existence and interaction into being. Rather, He rolls up his sleeves and gets down to the business of Divine Sacrifice: Divine action without action, which is the highest example.

Having dealt with the world of men and the importance of duty to life *exemplar* in the previous verse, Lord Krishna offers himself as an example of duty. Living free from activity in the relative, '*Regardless, I engage in action*.'

I do my duty in the transcendental field of the Divine to support continuity in life and evolution in the non-transcendent (7.05 – 7.12).

Krishna emphasizes His engagement in duty as an example. Connecting to this, in the following verse, he asserts that if He were to cease unwearied activity, people would lack the high example of duty. The verse underscores the importance of Krishna's continuous commitment to duty as a guiding influence for mankind.

3.23. What if I did not continue unwearied in activity? Men in every way follow My example, Arjuna.

Duty is the highest order of action on all levels of creation. '*If I did not continue unwearied in activity?*' there would be no high example of duty to follow (previous verse). His action lies at the root of all action. The take-home message: follow my example, '*Do your duty!*' (3.08).

Krishna emphasizes the importance of unwearied activity, setting an example of duty for others to follow. In the following verse, He asserts that if He were to cease action, chaos would ensue, underscoring the crucial role of Arjuna's duty in maintaining the order and wellbeing of the world.

3.24. If I did not act, these worlds would perish and I would cause confusion and destroy these people.

'*If I did not act,*' there would be no continuity in the transcendent and the non-transcendent relative fields of life (7.04; 7.05 – 7.12). Good and increase would fail to flourish. Confusion would reign supreme. *Sans* my principle of increase, '*These worlds would perish*' in the helter-skelter of apathy and instability born of entropy (3.22). The take-home message: so will your world perish if you do not perform sacrificial actions based on sacrifice of desire.

Krishna asserts that if He were to cease action, chaos would ensue, and worlds would perish. He emphasizes the vital role of duty in maintaining order. Connecting to this, in the following verse, Krishna differentiates between the unwise, bound by selfish desires, and the wise, who act selflessly for the world's welfare, transcending bondage to action.

3.25. While the unwise act out of bondage to action, Arjuna, so the wise should act without bondage, desiring the welfare of the world.

Action is action and based on desire, wise or unwise.

The unwise commit their energies to the horizontal plane of survival and material gain, stuck in the cycle of impression-desire-action, living with vain hope for something better. In bondage to action, the unwise act on their selfish desires to find happiness in objects of the senses. As a result, they fail to experience contentment glow from within. Without the glow of inner contentment infusing their actions, moral and ethical values stagnate.

Attempting to navigate life with neither polestar of morals nor compass heading of ethics, they fail to reach the port of steady virtuous actions. Rather, in the hit-or-miss of right and wrong action, they steer to the edge of perishing into the helter-skelter of apathy and instability (previous verse).

On the other hand, the 'wise act' on Nature's desire to further evolution (2.51) and so uplift the '*welfare of the world*.' 'The wise' do their duty. They innocently sacrifice their own desires and consequently act on Nature's desires '*without bondage*,' achieve inner contentment and experience moral and ethical values blossom (2.45).

Mother Nature desires '*the welfare of the world*.' Serve others' desires. Transcend desire in steady and established intellect. Act on Nature's desire (2.51).

Here, Krishna contrasts the unwise, bound by desires, with the wise, who act selflessly for the world's welfare. In the following verse, He advises the wise to avoid creating divisions among the ignorant. By performing selfless actions, the wise inspire others, fostering a harmonious path to liberation.

3.26. *The wise should not create a division in the minds of the ignorant who are bound to action. Steadfast in performing selfless actions, the wise inspire others to act likewise.*

Experience counts. Krishna advises the wise not to create divisions in the minds of the ignorant — those who fail to see Self separate from action — by confusing them with descriptions of higher states of consciousness and the uninvolved nature of the Self. But rather, inspire them to do their duty through selfless actions by performing selfless actions as an example. In the following verse, He reveals that the Gunas of Nature perform all actions. Krishna's guidance encourages the wise to inspire others through exemplary actions in harmony with Nature.

Gunas act on Gunas:

Overview:

We find ourselves woven into the fabric of nature, constantly interacting with the world around us. The gunas govern this interaction, the gunas being the fundamental qualities of Nature that influence our thoughts, actions and overall existence. These gunas — sattva, rajas and tamas — are not just abstract concepts but active forces that shape our daily lives.

Sattva represents purity and harmony, embodying clarity and balance. When sattva prevails, our minds are calm, our actions are righteous and we experience inner peace. It is the quality that brings us closer to our higher Self, guiding us towards truth and enlightenment.

Rajas, on the other hand, is the force of activity and passion. It drives us to act, to seek pleasure and achievement. Under its influence, we are dynamic and ambitious, constantly striving for success and fulfillment. However, this constant motion can also lead to restlessness and dissatisfaction, as the pursuit of desires can be endless.

Tamas signifies darkness, inertia, retarding action, and dissolution. It is the quality of ignorance and lethargy, which can cloud our judgment and lead to inaction. When tamas dominates, we find ourselves stuck in a rut, unable to break free from habits and patterns that no longer serve us. It is the force that binds us to ignorance and delusion, obscuring our true nature.

The balance of gunas within us determines the quality of our thoughts and actions. How to balance the gunas? Transcend desires and the actions they seed; transcend the gunas of nature. Transcend confusion and darkness. Practice Karma Yoga and navigate life's challenges with greater ease and purpose. This balance allows us to act with intention, guided by Nature's wisdom rather than driven by impulse.

Ultimately, the interplay of gunas reflects the divine dance of creation. Each of us participates in this cosmic ballet, moving in rhythm with the forces that shape our existence. By harmonizing these forces through the practice of Karma Yoga — sacrificing selfish desires, actions and the gunas by serving others' desires — we align ourselves with Brahman's purity of primal creation and with divine will, achieving a state of inner harmony and fulfillment that fuels the gunas and gives them direction.

3.27. The Gunas of Nature perform all actions. He whose mind is confused by egoism holds, 'I am the doer.'

Nature sows the seed impulses to further evolution through the gods (3.11) and through the gods, *'the Gunas of Nature perform all actions.'* Only those who directly experience separation of Self from action — in either the practice of Karma Yoga (*'steady intellect,'* 2.55) or living Cosmic Consciousness in daily life (*'established intellect,'* 2.57) — know the Truth of action.

This verse is the experience equivalent of understanding gained in verse 2.71: *'Independent from the sense of I and mine.'* When we identify with contented Self (2.45), we innocently abandon egoism and the sense *'I am the doer.'*

However, *'He whose mind is confused by egoism'* and holds *'I am the doer'* lives in ignorance of the Gunas carrying out all actions. He sees himself as the performer of action and the achiever of outcomes. From lack of directly experiencing detachment of Self from action, he is *'unwise'* (3.25), that is, he has not wised up to acting on Nature's desires (2.51).

Krishna explains that the Gunas of Nature perform all actions, and those confused by egoism think they are the doers. In the following verse, He states that those who understand the Truth about the Gunas and experience action separate from the Self are not bound by actions.

3.28. *But he who knows the Truth about the role Gunas play, Arjuna, knowing Gunas act upon the Gunas, is not bound to actions.*

To know the Truth about the Gunas is to experience action separate from contented Self (previous verse). Absorbed in contentment, we innocently see action unfolding of its own accord. We know — through understanding and direct experience — *'the Truth about the role Gunas play.'*

Krishna asserts that those who understand the role of Gunas and experience action separate from the Self are not bound by actions. Connecting to this, in the following verse, He explains that those deluded by the Gunas are bound to actions, emphasizing the importance of knowing this truth about the Gunas' role to avoid confusion.

Free from delusion:

Overview:

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, we often find ourselves caught in a web of illusions and misconceptions. These delusions shape our perceptions and drive our actions, leading us astray from our true purpose. To break free from delusion we embark on a journey toward clarity and understanding, a journey that promises profound transformation.

Imagine standing at the edge of a tranquil lake at dawn. The mist rises from the water, shrouding the landscape in a veil of mystery. As the sun ascends, its rays pierce through the fog, gradually revealing the serene beauty of the scene. This awakening mirrors our own journey toward enlightenment. When free from delusion, we see the world, unencumbered by the distortions of ignorance and false beliefs.

Delusion manifests in many forms. It can be as simple as a misunderstanding or as complex as a deeply ingrained belief system. Often, it stems from our desires and fears, which cloud our judgment and obscure our vision. When we chase after fleeting pleasures or succumb to irrational fears, we become ensnared in a cycle of illusion.

The role of the higher Self in overcoming delusion cannot be overstated. Our higher Self is our inner compass, guiding us toward truth and away from delusion. It is the voice of wisdom within us, often drowned out by the noise of our daily lives. By attuning ourselves to this inner guidance through the practice of Karma Yoga, we navigate the complexities of life with greater ease and understanding. Such is the profound strength of simply serving others' desires

The path to liberation from delusion also involves a deepening of our relationship with the divine. By sacrificing desire and aligning ourselves with the creative force of Brahman we open ourselves to divine wisdom and guidance. This act of sacrificing desire is not a sign of weakness, but rather a recognition of our true nature and our connection to the divine source of all knowledge.

As we progress on the path of Karma Yoga, we experience moments of profound insight and understanding. These moments are like the sun breaking through the mist, illuminating our path and revealing the truth that was always there. Each revelation brings us closer to a state of enlightenment, free from the shackles of delusion.

3.29. Those deluded by the Gunas of Nature are bound to the actions of the Gunas. Those who know the whole Truth should not disturb the ignorant who know only partial truth.

The '*ignorant*' search to experience liberation from desires and actions.

'*Those deluded by the Gunas of Nature*' do not know '*the Truth about the role Gunas play*' (previous verse). In the absence of inner contentment, attractive qualities found in objects of the senses kindle desire. Thinking happiness lies within the object of desire and that happiness requires taking action to experience the object deludes the ignorant. They become '*bound to the actions of the Gunas*' in cycles of impression-desire-action (2.39), thinking '*I am the doer*' (3.27).

'*The ignorant who know only the partial truth,*' intellectually understand this '*whole truth*' about the Gunas acting on the Gunas but they have not experienced liberation from action. Therefore, rather than proffer intellectual understanding alone and create confusion, one '*who knows the whole truth*' about the Gunas should encourage others to take action: '*Do your duty!*' Then and only then will they see the whole Truth through the experience of separation from action.

Krishna explains that those deluded by the Gunas of Nature are bound to actions, emphasizing the importance of knowing the whole Truth. Following, He urges Arjuna to defer all actions to Him, maintaining the Self, breaking bondage to selfish desire, and finding liberation from the delusion of being the doer.

3.30. Defer all actions to Me, maintain the Self, free yourself from selfish desire, and depart from delusion. Fight!

Step up to the plate. Serve others' desires. '*Fight!*' '*Do your duty!*' (3.08). Instantly liberate yourself from '*I am the doer*' (3.27) and break the bondage to action. '*Maintain the Self*' separate from actions, deferring '*all actions to Me.*'

Krishna advises Arjuna to defer all actions to him, maintain the Self and fight without selfish desire. This aligns with His teaching in the following verse, emphasizing that those who faithfully follow His teaching, centered on doing one's duty, find liberation from the bondage to action on the path of Karma Yoga.

Faith in Krishna's teaching:

Overview

These verses, nestled within the broader discourse on duty and right actions, provide insights into the nature of faith and the consequences of its absence. As we delve into these verses, we uncover a blueprint for living that transcends the immediate context of the epic, offering guidance for all who seek a life of purpose and fulfillment.

Krishna emphasizes the simplicity and profundity of duty. He urges Arjuna — and, by extension, all of us — to embrace the practice of Karma Yoga, the yoga of action. "Do your duty!" Krishna's words are both a command and an invitation. They call upon us to engage in our responsibilities with faith and dedication. Those who faithfully follow His teachings find the path to be not only effortless but also immensely and immediately rewarding. This faith in action — serving others' desires — naturally performed without attachment to outcomes, liberates one from the bondage of action. It is through the practice of selfless service, through performing one's duty without concern for personal gain, that we infuse our actions with the essence of Brahman, the ultimate reality.

The significance of duty lies in its capacity to align our individual actions with the cosmic order. By performing our duties faithfully, we harmonize our lives with the intrinsic order of the cosmos. This alignment not only brings personal liberation from action but also contributes to the collective wellbeing of society. Thus, Krishna's teaching is not merely a personal directive but a call to uphold the moral and ethical fabric of the world.

Krishna also addresses the consequences of rejecting His teachings. Those who do not follow His teachings, who criticize without practicing, are described as confused and doomed. Their failure to engage in the practice of duty and selfless service leaves them bound to the cycle of impression-desire-action. Without the direct experience of liberation that comes from practicing Karma Yoga, they remain lost in ignorance, their minds carried away by the turbulence of the senses. These verses serve as stark reminders of the importance of not only understanding the teachings intellectually but also embodying them through consistent practice.

The essence of Krishna's message: Faith in His teachings and diligent practice of duty are the keys to liberation. By committing to our duties with unwavering faith, we transcend egoisms grip, which falsely claims personal authorship of actions. Instead, we come to realize that it is the gunas, the fundamental qualities of nature, that are the true agents of action. In this realization, we find freedom from the bondage of action.

Krishna's assurance that faith comes quickly to those who follow His teachings is a testament to the transformative power of selfless service. It is through the lived experience of duty and selfless action that one immediately gains deeper understanding and conviction. This faith is not blind but is grounded in the direct experience of the divine in everyday actions. It is the faith that sees beyond the immediate outcomes to the broader, more profound truths of existence.

On the other hand, those who reject this path miss the opportunity for deeper understanding. Their criticism without practice leads to confusion and a perpetual state of unrest. Krishna's use of the term "doomed" underscores the gravity of ignoring the path of duty. It is a life ensnared in the superficial pursuits of the senses, devoid of peace that comes from alignment with the divine order.

In summary, the *Bhagavad Gita* offers a powerful exhortation to embrace our duties with faith and dedication. Through this practice of Karma Yoga, we find liberation and contribute to the harmony of the world. Conversely, rejecting this path results in confusion and bondage to action. These teachings of selflessly serving others' desires hold enduring relevance, guiding us towards a life of purpose, peace and ultimate liberation.

3.31. *Those who faithfully follow my teaching accept it without finding fault, they are liberated from bondage to action.*

Q: Exactly what is Krishna's teaching?

Ans: '*Do your duty!*' (3.08).

Gaining faith in this practice of Karma Yoga comes quickly. Even those new to the practice '*who faithfully follow my teaching*' — those who understand the importance of duty and perform it — find no fault because no fault exists. '*My teaching*' is the effortless, obstacle-free and rewarding path. '*They [those who faithfully follow my teaching] are [instantly] liberated from bondage to action*' in the Yoga of action.

Here, Krishna asserts that faithfully following his teaching of performing duty leads to liberation from the bondage to action. Conversely, in the following verse, He warns that those who complain and fail to practice His teaching are confused, doomed, mindless, and lost in ignorance, lacking the knowledge gained through direct experience.

3.32. *But the complaining who do not practice my teaching, know them to be confused about knowledge, doomed, mindless and lost.*

Those who find fault with My teaching fail to practice it (previous verse). Consequently, they never gain '*knowledge*' by directly experiencing liberation. They fail to feel the Divine infuse their sacrificial actions (3.15). Instead, they are '*doomed*' to bondage (2.39). They are '*mindless*': '*The turbulent senses forcibly carry away the mind*' of those confused about knowledge (2.60). They have '*lost*' their way on the path of evolution.

Krishna warns that those who criticize his teaching without practicing it are confused, doomed and lost. Connecting to the following verse, He asserts that individuals naturally act according to their own nature. Acting contrary to one's inherent duty, leads to confusion, stress and frustration in life.

Go with the flow:

Overview:

The phrase "Go with the flow" conjures images of a lazy river, a gentle current guiding us effortlessly along. But to truly go with the flow in life is not a passive drift; it is a conscious embrace of the present, a deliberate harmonization with the rhythms of existence that we naturally achieve in Karma Yoga. It requires an active participation in the world, a surrender to the natural currents while skillfully navigating its ebbs and flows. This concept, rich in nuance, invites us to live dynamically in service to others, attuned to both our inner selves and the broader, ever-changing world around us.

To go with the flow means to align oneself with the deeper currents of life, much like a river pilot harnessing the currents. It is not about relinquishing control but about experiencing where control lies. The *Bhagavad Gita*'s teaching on selfless service offers insights into this principle of action. Krishna, in His wisdom, teaches that one must act in accordance with one's duty. This teaching highlights a fundamental truth: the flow of life is best navigated when we focus on our actions and let go of the obsessive need to control outcomes.

In practical terms, going with the flow involves the balance of effort and surrender we naturally achieve in the practice of Karma Yoga. Imagine a musician playing an improvisational piece. They must be thoroughly grounded in their craft, yet open to spontaneity, letting the music guide them. Similarly, in life, when we serve others' desires, we remain flexible, ready to

adapt to the unforeseen. This requires trust in the unfolding process, a recognition that while we steer the boat, the river itself has its own course; while we serve others' desires, actions go of their own accord to achieve spiritual and material wellbeing.

When we go with the flow, we are not resisting life but moving in harmony with it. This does not mean we become passive or complacent. On the contrary, it calls for the heightened awareness and responsiveness to the present moment we naturally achieve in the practice of Karma Yoga: we engage fully with life as it is, rather than how we wish it to be. Such is the nature of duty.

Krishna's teachings also remind us that going with the flow is about aligning with a higher purpose. It is about recognizing that our individual actions are part of a larger, cosmic order. When we act selflessly, guided by a sense of duty and service, we tap into this greater flow. We tap into the flow of Brahman's primal creativity. We become instruments through which a higher will operates. This perspective brings a profound sense of peace and fulfillment, as we realize that our efforts contribute to a greater good.

Going with the flow allows us to be more present and engaged with what is happening around us. We become more adaptable and resilient, able to handle setbacks and challenges with a calm and composed mind. Our relationships improve as we become more attuned to others, listening and responding with empathy and understanding.

In conclusion, to go with the flow is to live in harmony with the natural currents of life. It is an active engagement with the world, guided by inner stillness and a higher sense of duty. By achieving this principle through Karma Yoga — serving others' desires, thus sacrificing our own — we find greater peace, fulfillment and resilience. It is a timeless wisdom that invites us to trust in the unfolding process and to participate fully in the dance of life.

3.33. One acts according to their own nature. Even the enlightened follow their nature. What will restraint accomplish?

This verse builds on 3.06, *'He who sits restraining his organs of action.'*

Krishna summarizes the previous four verses. Men and women of action follow their nature: performing duty, sacrificing desires, breaking bondage to action, realizing independence of Self, and experiencing Divine Brahman infuse all actions.

Follow your nature. Go with the flow of dharma: practice Karma Yoga (2.40). *'Even the enlightened,'* those who experience the Self separate from desire and action, follow their nature and perform right actions supporting evolution.

For men and women of action, what can restraint — holding back, caution, control — accomplish? Serving the desires of others is in our DNA and therefore is our core nature (3.10). Restraint from serving others is akin to swimming upstream. The direction is all wrong to fulfill responsibilities duty requires. Pushing against the flow of dharma, they are *'doomed'* to bondage; *'mindless'* they ride life's rocky rapids (previous verse). Indeed, *'What will restraint accomplish?'* Ans: Confusion, stress and frustration in daily life, and spiritual poverty.

Krishna asserts that individuals should act according to their nature and follow the flow of dharma, as restraint from duty is counterproductive. In the following verses, He compares desire's influence to smoke covering fire, emphasizing that external qualities can overshadow the Self. Both verses stress the importance of aligning actions with one's inherent nature.

3.34. Within the object of the senses lies its attractive and aversive qualities. Do not be swayed by these enemies besetting your path.

The weak mind sees the potential to experience happiness in an object's attractive qualities. Through desire for happiness, they become attached to the object and the happiness it promises, reinforcing bondage to action, overshadowing the Self and retarding evolution (2.39).

The power to overshadow the Self is also true for *'aversive qualities,'* say, snakebite. Fear overshadows the steady nature of Self and we become overpowered and obsessed with consequences. As a result, we lose powers of discernment and balanced mind, degrading our ability to address the situation effectively.

'Do not be swayed by these enemies besetting your path' of dharma. Attraction and aversion excite the senses, overshadowing mind, intellect, ego, and Self, throwing us off our evolutionary path to higher spiritual and material wellbeing.

Krishna asserts that individuals should act according to their nature and duty, questioning the effectiveness of restraint. In the following verse, He emphasizes the superiority of performing one's own duty well over attempting

another's, advocating adherence to one's dharma to evolve spiritually and materially, warning against perilous dangers in neglecting duty.

Be yourself:

Overview:

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken," Oscar Wilde famously remarked, capturing an essential truth about human existence. This sentiment resonates deeply within the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Krishna advises Arjuna on the importance of embracing one's own duty and nature. The wisdom encapsulated in the phrase "Be yourself" transcends mere self-acceptance; it embodies the profound spiritual and philosophical journey toward Self-realization and liberation.

In the *Gita*, Krishna emphasizes the necessity of performing one's own duty as opposed to attempting to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of others. This notion is elegantly conveyed in the following verse, which states, "Because one can perform it, one's own duty, well performed, is superior to poorly performing the duty of another." Here, the idea is clear: each individual is uniquely equipped to fulfill their own role in the cosmic order, and by doing so, they contribute to the greater harmony and evolution of the universe.

Krishna's counsel to Arjuna underscores that duty is inherently tied to one's nature. Acting in accordance with one's nature ensures not only personal fulfillment but also aligns one with the broader flow of dharma. This alignment fosters a sense of unity with the cosmos, guiding us toward a more enlightened and harmonious existence. Attempting to perform another's duty disrupts this natural flow, leading to confusion, frustration and a stagnation in spiritual growth.

The directive to "Be yourself" calls for a deep understanding and acceptance of one's true nature. This involves recognizing and embracing one's strengths, limitations and unique path in life. Such self-awareness is crucial for genuine spiritual progress, as it allows individuals to act with authenticity and purpose. Krishna advocates aligning one's actions accordingly through selfless service.

Furthermore, the practice of Karma Yoga, or the Yoga of action, is integral to this process. By performing actions selflessly and without attachment to the fruits of those actions, individuals transcend the bondage of action and attain liberation. This practice reinforces the importance of duty and selfless service, which are central themes in Krishna's discourse. Serving others'

desires and performing one's duty without selfish intent purifies the mind and heart, paving the way for higher states of consciousness.

Krishna also warns against the perils of neglecting one's duty. He cautions that failing to perform one's duty can bring perilous danger, a stark reminder of the potential spiritual and material consequences of straying from one's path of duty. This admonition highlights the importance of steadfastness and commitment to one's responsibilities, as neglecting them can lead to detrimental effects on both individual and collective wellbeing.

In essence, the exhortation to "Be yourself" is a call to live authentically and in harmony with one's true nature. It is an invitation to engage in self-discovery and to act in ways that reflect one's deepest values and inherent qualities. By doing so, we not only achieve personal fulfillment but also contribute to the larger tapestry of life, fostering a world where each person's unique contributions enhance the collective whole.

The wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita*, as articulated by Krishna, offers timeless guidance on how to navigate the complexities of life with grace and purpose. By embracing our true selves and performing our duties to those we honor and love with dedication and selflessness, we align ourselves with the divine order and move closer to the goal of liberation from action. In this journey of self-realization, the simple yet profound directive to "Be yourself" serves as a beacon, illuminating the path to inner peace and spiritual enlightenment.

3.35. Because one can perform it, one's own duty, well performed, is superior to poorly performing the duty of another. Better is death in performing one's own duty; the duty of another brings perilous danger.

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken," Oscar Wilde. One can only perform one's duty well; it's in your DNA. Men and women of action should follow their dharma, go with the flow of duty and evolve to the highest levels of spiritual and material wellbeing. Or rather, attempt to perform someone else's duty, struggle to follow someone else's dharma, fail to achieve skill in action, waste time, advance frustration and disappointment, retard evolution, and stagnate on the horizontal plane.

Rather, follow your dharma. '*Do your duty!*' Practice Karma Yoga. Serve the desires of those you honor and love.

'Better is death in performing one's own duty; the duty of another brings perilous danger.' Death is a respite built into cosmic purpose and necessary for evolution. After dropping the body, we take on a new one and more rapid

progress in evolution is possible. The greater danger of retarding evolution lies in performing someone else's duty, disrupting the course of evolution and flow of dharma, jamming a stick into the spokes of '*the wheel set revolving*' (3.16).

Krishna advises performing one's own duty, emphasizing the superiority of well-executed personal duty over attempting another's. This aligns with His teaching in 3.36 and 3.37, illustrating how desires, akin to smoke covering fire, can obscure the uninvolved nature of the higher Self. Self-authenticity in duty is paramount for spiritual progress.

Good and bad of desire:

Overview:

In our journey through life, desire acts as both a compass and a storm. It directs us toward our goals while often leading us astray into turbulent waters. The concept of desire, its dual nature, and its profound impact on our actions are central themes in many philosophical discourses. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna elucidates the good and bad of desire, offering timeless wisdom that helps us navigate our internal and external worlds with greater clarity and purpose.

Desire, in its purest form, can be a powerful motivator. It propels us toward achievements, fostering growth and evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing. Krishna speaks to Arjuna about the necessity of desire for action, explaining that without it, one falls into inertia and stagnation. This aspect of desire is inherently positive, as it aligns with our natural instincts to seek fulfillment and strive for excellence. It is desire that fuels our ambitions, encourages us to dream and gives us the energy to transform those dreams into reality.

However, the darker side of desire emerges when it becomes unbridled and consuming. Krishna identifies desire and its close companion, anger, as forces that can lead to sinful actions. When strong selfish desires clash or go unfulfilled, they often give rise to frustration and anger, creating a destructive cycle. This collision not only hinders personal evolution but also disturbs the harmony within and around us. The unchecked pursuit of selfish desire overshadows the higher Self, much like smoke obscuring fire or dust covering a mirror, preventing us from seeing our true nature.

Krishna's teachings emphasize the importance of Self-control, where the lower self united in the higher Self takes on its contented quality. He

compares uncontrolled desire to a raging fire that consumes everything in its path, illustrating how it can drive individuals to act against their own better judgment and moral principles. Through Self-control (2.61), achieved in Karma Yoga, one prevents the turmoil and suffering desires often bring.

Furthermore, Krishna introduces the concept of aligning desires with one's dharma, or duty. He stresses that performing one's duty selflessly can transform desire into a positive force. This practice of Karma Yoga allows individuals to act in harmony with their higher Self and the greater cosmic order. By dedicating actions to a higher purpose and serving others' desires, we transcend selfish desires and achieve a state of inner contentment.

In contrast, when desires are ego-centered and driven by selfishness, they lead to actions harmful to oneself and others. Krishna warns against being swayed by the attractive and aversive qualities of sensory objects, as these can overshadow the Self and disrupt the path of spiritual and material evolution. He advocates for a balanced approach, where desires are neither suppressed nor indulged in excess, but harmonized with one's duty and higher purpose in serving others' desires.

In conclusion, the good and bad of desire intricately weave into the fabric of our life. Desire can be a force for growth and evolution when aligned with our higher purpose of duty and naturally affected through Self-control. However, when left unchecked, it can lead to destructive actions and hinder our spiritual and material progress. Krishna's teachings guide us toward mastering desire by innocently renouncing it when serving other's desires, transforming it from a potential source of turmoil into a powerful tool for achieving harmony and liberation. Through this balance, we navigate the complexities of life with wisdom and grace, ultimately finding peace and fulfillment within ourselves.

3.36. Arjuna asks: *What is it that impels a man to unwillingly commit sin, O Krishna, as if urged by an evil force?*

3.37. Krishna responds: *The force of evil is desire; the force of evil is anger. The force of evil is born of Rajo Guna, all-consuming. Know this to be your enemy here on earth.*

Rajo Guna gives desire energy and direction to bring it to fruition. A thought rises out of pure consciousness of Self and develops into a desire, and through Rajo Guna gains forward momentum. Acting in control, Rajo Guna has the peddle to the metal while moderating Gunas of Sattva (steering wheel) and Tamas (brakes) sit in the backseat.

Rajo Guna steps even harder on the accelerator [*'the force of evil'*], instigating a more permanent and severe collision. Sattva and Tamas are told in no uncertain terms to “SHUT UP.” Lacking these moderating influences disrupts the natural flow and harmony required to bring desires to fruition. We forfeit peace of mind and consequently, happiness (2.66). Happiness lost, frustration and anger blindly set in to find it.

Frustration and anger become *'all-consuming.'* Attention flows outward to find happiness in the wreckage of desires. Lower self dominates. We lose cardinal virtues (2.45) and ethical guidance. Unchecked, evil actions hold sway. Life suffers.

How to attenuate anger? *'Do your duty!'* Sacrifice desire. Establish intellect in the inner quiet of Self. Achieve union and experience separation of Self from desires and the actions they seed. Outsource desires to Nature and actions to the Gunas (3.11 - 3.12, 3.27 – 3.28). Perform actions in accord with dharma and evolution, where desires travel similar trajectories steered by all three Gunas, that is, travel trajectories that support each other.

Here, Krishna identifies desire and anger as forces of evil born of all-consuming Rajo Guna. In the following verse, He compares desire to smoke covering fire, dust obscuring a mirror, and the amnion enveloping an embryo, illustrating how desire overshadows the true nature of the Self, hindering wisdom and discernment.

3.38. *As smoke covers fire, dust covers a mirror, as the amnion envelops the embryo, so that covers this.*

'That covers this.' Desire covers higher Self. Desire is *'the enemy.'* (previous verse). Yet, desire is all important to driving life and wellbeing.

1) *'As smoke covers fire.'* Desires arise from pure consciousness of Self but overshadow it.

2) *'As dust covers a mirror.'* Outer attractive and aversive qualities found in objects of the senses stimulate desire — and evolution — but overshadows Self.

3) *'As the amnion envelops the embryo.'* The amnion nourishes the embryo. Desires nourish survival and evolution but overshadow Self.

Desires overshadow the uninvolved nature of Self, leaving us with the delusion that desire and action involve us. The Truth: Nature's desire furthers evolution (2.51) and the Gunas act upon the Gunas (3.28).

Krishna compares desire to smoke, dust and amnion, illustrating how desire overshadows the uninvolved nature of the Self. In the following verse, He warns that this insatiable desire, though essential for life and evolution, veils wisdom, leading individuals to lose sight of the spontaneous wisdom rooted in the Self.

3.39. Arjuna, this insatiable flame of desire veils wisdom and is the eternal enemy of the wise.

Having realized the Self as separate from desires, we outsource desires to Nature (2.51). Yet, even then, selfish desires arise that overshadow the Self (previous verse). Such is the power of attractive (and aversive) qualities found in objects of the senses to knock us off balance.

We lose the spontaneous wisdom to act on Nature's desires (2.51) when our selfish desires overshadow the uninvolved nature of Self. Consequently, we lose wisdom when '*this insatiable flame* [of selfish] *desire*' to experience happiness in an object's attractive qualities overshadows the uninvolved inner contentment of higher Self and Nature's role to further evolution.

Krishna acknowledges that the insatiable flame of desire obscures wisdom and poses a perennial challenge for the wise. Transitioning to the following verse, He describes desire's domain: senses, mind and intellect. Through these, desire overpowers wisdom, deluding the dweller in the body. Controlling the senses with higher Self is crucial to dispelling this destructive force.

3.40. Senses, mind and intellect are said to be its domain. Through them, desires overpower wisdom, deluding the dweller in the body.

'Its' refers to desire which is '*the eternal enemy of the wise*' (previous verse).

In its tendency to find greater happiness, the mind shifts to the delights of imagination, overshadowing the uninvolved nature of the contented Self (3.38) and overpowering wisdom (previous verse). It is as if active imagination, which knows no limits, sucks the individualized nature of the

Self — '*dweller in the body*' — out into the relative, empowering the relative *via* turbulent senses (2.60) to lord over our Absolute nature.

Here, Krishna explains how desire dominates the senses, mind, and intellect, deluding the individual. Transitioning into the following verse, He advises Arjuna to subdue the senses by performing duty, shaking off the destructive influence of desire. By mastering the senses through duty, one overcomes the dark side of desire and regains wisdom.

Unite self within Self:

Overview:

The *Bhagavad Gita* offers a profound narrative on the lower self uniting with the higher Self, the state of Yoga. Krishna, the divine charioteer, imparts wisdom to Arjuna, urging him to transcend the mundane through the sublime act of uniting lower self within higher Self through the practice of Karma Yoga.

The journey begins with an acknowledgment of the human condition. The lower self — comprised of the senses, mind and intellect — is prone to the insatiable flame of desire. This desire, ever elusive and all-consuming, clouds wisdom and misguides the individual. Krishna identifies the senses, mind and intellect as the battlegrounds where desire wages its relentless war.

To combat this formidable foe, Krishna advises Arjuna to perform his duty. By naturally controlling the senses through duty, one dispels the fog of desire. This act of subduing the senses enables the surrender of the intellect and mind to the higher Self. When the higher Self governs the lower self, desires no longer enslave feelings, thinking and action. This state of mastery over senses and desire is crucial for regaining wisdom and discernment.

Krishna then delineates the hierarchy within subjective reality: the senses are superior to their objects, the mind surpasses the senses, the intellect is above the mind, and ultimately, the Self prevails over the intellect. This progression underscores the need for realizing the Self. The intellect, in its highest form, is still subordinate to the Self. Therefore, the ultimate aim is to know the Self beyond intellect of lower self, to unite the lower self within the higher Self, and to conquer the formidable enemy of desire.

Achieving this union results in a state of Yoga, where the bounded lower self merges with the unbounded higher Self. In this union, the contented qualities

of the higher Self infuse lower self, leading to an unintentional and effortless performance of right actions. These actions support both spiritual and material wellbeing, bringing about inner equilibrium and Self-control over the lower self's mind and intellect. This liberation from cycles of action is not forced but arises naturally from the renunciation of desires and selfless service to others — achieved by serving others' desires.

In this union, the lower self is liberated from the dualities of life: success and failure, pleasure and pain. The virtues of courage, discernment, justice, and moderation flourish as the individual operates from a place of inner contentment. The glow of this inner contentment infuses the lower self's every action, leading to a life of balance and purpose.

Krishna's teachings to Arjuna emphasize that the higher Self is unbounded and exists beyond the transient nature of the lower self. By uniting the lower self with the higher Self through the practice of Karma Yoga — selflessly serving others' desires — one attains a state of Cosmic Consciousness, where the distinction between self and Self blurs, and profound tranquility pervades. This journey is not merely a philosophical concept but a practical guide to living a life of fulfillment and enlightenment achieved by serving others' desires and consequently, sacrificing our own.

3.41. *Therefore, Arjuna, subdue the senses to shake off this evil that destroys wisdom and power of discernment.*

'Desire veils wisdom and is the eternal enemy of the wise' (3.39).

Desire *'is all consuming and most evil'* (3.37).

The highest *'power of discernment'* arises from the intellect established in the Self (2.57).

Through desire, the senses attach mind and intellect to their objects. On the other hand, subdued senses — achieved by performing duty — surrender intellect and mind to Absolute Self. Putting the Self in "control," the senses no longer enslave mind and intellect through the office of desire (2.61). Senses subdued by performing duty, we *'shake off this evil [of desire] that destroys wisdom and power of discernment.'*

Krishna advises Arjuna to subdue the senses through performing duty, breaking free from desire's destructive influence. Transitioning to the following verse, He elucidates the hierarchy within subjective reality: senses surpass objects, the mind surpasses senses, the intellect surpasses the

mind, and ultimately, the Self prevails over the intellect, emphasizing the need for Self-realization.

3.42. They say the senses are superior. Yet the mind is superior to the senses. Moreover, the intellect is superior to the mind. That which is superior to the intellect is Self.

A superior aspect of subjective reality incorporates an inferior one. The senses are superior to the objects they gather information on. The mind processes information gathered by the senses and is superior to senses. The intellect makes decisions on the information rendered by the mind and is superior to mind. The Self is superior to intellect and all the previous subjective aspects of lower self and Absolutely controls them through its contented Absolute nature (2.61).

When lower self unites within higher Self — when we achieve Yoga — lower self takes on qualities of higher Self (following verse).

Here, Krishna outlines the hierarchy of subjective aspects, stating that the Self is superior to the intellect. Transitioning to the following verse, He advises Arjuna to know the Self beyond intellect, unite the lower self within the higher Self, and conquer the formidable enemy of desire to attain contentment through the practice of Karma Yoga.

3.43. Having known the Self which is beyond intellect, still the self by the Self alone; slay the enemy in the form of desire, difficult to conquer.

“Cooler heads prevail.” Practice Karma Yoga by performing duty (3.08); unite bounded lower self within unbounded higher Self in daily activity (2.45). In union, the lower self — senses, mind and intellect (previous verse) — takes on the Absolute quality of higher Self. *‘Still the self by the Self alone.’*

When we identify with the *‘Self which is beyond intellect,’* the lower self unites with it (2.45). In union, the unbounded inner contentment of higher Self outshines happiness promised by objects of the senses, subduing desire and its hold on intellect, mind and senses (previous three verses). Thus, we *‘slay the enemy in the form of desire, difficult to conquer.’*

This is the experience of Cosmic Consciousness in daily life, performing duty by sacrificing desires. Acting on Nature’s desires, feelings, thoughts and actions integrate to achieve the highest good for all. Judgments align with

Nature's desire to further evolution. Divine intelligence infuses right actions. We witness ourselves moving through life along our path of evolution. We enjoy the fruits of action while unattached to them. We feel Nature's support and find ourselves going with the flow. In the groove of duty, unattached and unbounded, dynamically active and purposeful, others follow our example.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 4 — Cosmic Consciousness — Understanding *plus* Experience *equals* Knowledge

Seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, we feel familiar with all, we know all.

Commentary on Ch 4 verses 1 - 42:

Know the Supreme Secret:

Overview:

The concept of "Know the Supreme Secret" unfolds a profound revelation that is both elusive and ever-present. This secret, deeply embedded in the practice of Karma Yoga, transcends the boundaries of time, culture and individual experience. It invites seekers to perceive a timeless truth that lies right before their eyes, often overlooked in its simplicity and omnipresence.

Lord Krishna begins by recounting the history of this imperishable Yoga — union of lower self with higher Self from serving others' desires — handed down through generations of royal sages who understood its essence and applied it to bring harmony to their lives and society. Over time, however, this knowledge was lost, obscured by the distractions and delusions of material existence. Krishna's message calls Arjuna — and us — to rediscover and revive this ancient practice, urging him to embrace his duty and achieve liberation through selfless action.

This Supreme Secret is not hidden in remote or mystical places. It does not reside in the esoteric depths of scriptures or in the arcane rituals of forgotten traditions. Instead, it is found in the ordinary, in the mundane acts of daily life performed with a spirit of selflessness and devotion. The practice of Karma Yoga, the yoga of action, is the key to unlocking this secret. By dedicating one's actions to serving others' desires and consequently, relinquishing selfish desires, one transcends the limitations of egoism and experiences the unity of all existence.

Krishna elucidates the distinction between His eternal, unchanging nature and the temporal, cyclical existence of human beings. While humans are bound by birth and rebirth, Krishna exists beyond time, manifesting Himself whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness rises. His divine interventions aim to restore balance and guide humanity back to the path of righteousness through the practice of selfless action.

Arjuna's confusion about Krishna's divine birth and teachings leads to a deeper exploration of the nature of reality and the role of divine guidance in human life. Krishna explains that His manifestations are driven by the need to protect the righteous, destroy the wicked and reestablish dharma. This cyclical restoration of dharma through divine intervention underscores the perpetual struggle between good and evil, and the necessity of divine guidance in maintaining cosmic order.

By performing one's duties without attachment to the fruits of actions, an individual achieves a state of inner peace and liberation. This practice not only benefits the individual but also contributes to the wellbeing of society.

Krishna's teachings emphasize the importance of faith, understanding and devotion in the pursuit of liberation. Doubt and ignorance are seen as obstacles to spiritual growth, while faith and understanding pave the way to enlightenment. The practice of Karma Yoga, coupled with a firm understanding of one's duty and a devotion to selfless service, leads to the realization of the Supreme Self and the attainment of Supreme Peace.

In summary, the Supreme Secret revealed by Krishna is the timeless truth of selfless action and the unity of all existence. It calls upon individuals to rise above selfish desires and egoistic pursuits, and to act in service to others: serve others' desires and innocently sacrifice your own. This ancient wisdom, though simple in its essence, holds the power to transform lives and restore harmony to the world. It is a call to action, a call to duty and ultimately, a call to realize the divine nature within each of us.

4.01. Lord Krishna: *I proclaimed this imperishable Yoga to Vivaswat, Vivaswat communicated it to Manu; Manu imparted it to Ikshwaku.*

4.02. *Received in succession, one generation to the next, the royal sages knew this Yoga. With the long lapse of time here on earth, knowledge of this Yoga was lost, Arjuna.*

4.03. *The Supreme Secret of this ancient Yoga, I have affirmed to you today because you are My devotee and friend.*

'I have affirmed to you today' the understanding (Ch 2) and experience (Ch 3) of this 'imperishable Yoga.'

Where could this 'Supreme Secret of this ancient Yoga' remain so deeply hidden it takes Divine intervention to reveal? Under a rock in a Himalayan cave? Embedded within a Gregorian Chant? Encoded in your popup

toaster's warranty? What about within the conundrum of Quantum Mechanics? In the stacks of the Bodleian Library? In *Principia Mathematica*?

None of these. Grouse around long enough and you will find it.

The only place to secret away this '*imperishable Yoga*' is in the only place you would never think to look. Ans: Right in front of your eyes. It is just too common to notice.

When dharma prevailed through Krishna's practice of Karma Yoga, right actions became natural in daily life. Selflessly serving others' was spontaneous, fulfilling and unfortunately, too obvious for its own preservation. Hence in time, the ancients took the practice of Karma Yoga for granted. There was nothing particularly noteworthy about right actions when widely practiced.

'*With the long lapse of time*' the ancients lost the knowledge of how sacrificing desire transcends the relative and fuels evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing. Without understanding, the experience of sacrificing desire lost its scaffolding and its uniqueness among all actions went unnoticed.

Selfishness in daily life held sway. Material gain through selfish actions eclipsed the subtleties of inner contentment, peace of mind and happiness (2.42 – 2.44). The ancients lost the synergy between understanding and experience so important to evolution. They forgot the power of gratitude and its importance to living in the present and nourishing higher powers — and themselves. They assumed authorship of action and outcome. They overpowered Nature's natural flow in their busy presumptive egoism.

Selfish wrong actions replaced selfless right actions. The ancients lost the primal importance of duty. Adharma prevailed.

The Supreme Secret of '*this ancient Yoga*' to revive dharma and right action through the practice of Karma Yoga? Ans: Follow Krishna's teaching, '*Do your duty!*' Sacrifice desire for the desires of others. Achieve liberation from action. Feel at home in the world.

Here, Lord Krishna reveals the Supreme Secret of this ancient Yoga to Arjuna. In the following verse, Arjuna questions Krishna about the apparent paradox of Him proclaiming this knowledge of Vivaswat in the distant past.

4.04. Arjuna asks: *Your birth was later, the birth of Vivaswat came earlier. How can I understand that You proclaimed it in the beginning?*

4.05. Krishna responds: *Many births have passed for you and for Me, Arjuna. I know them all but you do not.*

4.06. *Although I am birthless and my nature is imperishable, I am Lord of all beings and manifest through my own power.*

Arjuna and Krishna are made of different stuff. Arjuna is relative. He has been reincarnated into different lives innumerable times. Arjuna's memory is a function of brain chemistry and is based on what he has experienced in this incarnation. Arjuna experiences through lower self, subject to limited vision and far beyond recalling all he has been — let alone what he had for lunch yesterday. He is what he is.

On the other hand, Krishna is made of sterner stuff. He is not so much born as created out of his Divine nature. He is immortal and never changing. His relative nature is Absolute. Birthless, he lives in the present he creates. He is always the same and indifferent to the passage of time and the need for memory. He Is what He Is.

Here, Krishna asserts his birthless, imperishable nature, distinct from Arjuna's cyclical reincarnations. Connecting seamlessly, in the following verse, Krishna explains His periodic manifestations when dharma declines, emphasizing the vital role of His divine interventions to restore righteousness and guide humanity back to the path of selfless action.

4.07. *Whenever Dharma falls into decay and adharma gains favor, Arjuna, I manifest Myself.*

Our dharma is to practice Karma Yoga (2.40). Dharma is the omnipresent magnetic field of happiness flowing toward more fulfilling levels of spiritual and material wellbeing. Whenever we go with the flow of dharma, our path manifests in front of us. The practice of Karma Yoga is a direct means to achieve the summit of evolution; to practice Karma Yoga is to open the path and step forward along it. This intimate working relationship between practice and path brings fulfillment to life (2.46).

'Whenever dharma [the practice of Karma Yoga] falls into decay' the knowledge of selfless sacrifice of desire is '*lost to the world.*' Forward momentum along the path tapers off. Selfish actions overshadow selfless actions in accord with dharma.

To regain natural balance in individual life and society, '*I manifest Myself*' to teach the importance of duty.

Krishna asserts that whenever dharma declines, He manifests to restore it. This manifestation is explained further: Krishna declares His periodic incarnations to reestablish dharma, protect the righteous and eliminate those committing sinful wrong actions, illustrating the cyclical nature of divine intervention in cosmic order (following verse).

4.08. From age to age I take birth to reestablish dharma firmly, protect the righteous and destroy those who commit sinful wrong actions.

“The righteous is delivered from trouble and the wicked gets into it instead.”
— *Proverbs 11:8.*

Selfless sacrifice of desire sets ‘dharma’ back on track (previous verse). ‘*The righteous*’ naturally perform right actions. Society spontaneously practices Karma Yoga, fulfills natural duty, reclaims cardinal virtues, and fosters growth in spiritual and material wellbeing. Such righteous actions prove increasingly valuable to society, overriding pervasive, negative influences of adharma.

‘*Those who commit sinful wrong actions*’ sow the seeds of their destruction. They perform selfish wrong actions in the names of material gain and power, and undermine the spiritual foundation of material wellbeing (2.42 – 2.44). When those who commit ‘*sinful wrong actions*’ hold the reins of power and broadly influence culture, adharma flourishes. In such times lacking spiritual authority of action, wrong actions beget increasingly harmful wrong actions. Deteriorating society goosesteps down the road to disaster.

Through their selfless actions, the righteous sacrifice desire, gradually enliven Brahman in societal acts (3.15) and ‘*reestablish dharma firmly.*’

This ‘*Supreme Secret*’ (4.03) of selfless right action peeks through the clouds of ignorance, steadily reestablishing cardinal virtues and balance. The righteous who act on Nature’s desire to further evolution again prevail. Right actions gain momentum.

As the darkness of adharma gives way to the light of knowledge (this chapter), the wicked fall from power. The rewards of selfish wrong actions wane compared to those achieved through righteous behavior, burning up selfish desire and consequently, sacrificing the need for wrong actions and those who practice them.

Self-destruction too: There’s a notion that if a lie is told often enough it will be taken as true. To some degree that’s correct. But that’s not the point. Rather,

the perpetrator of lies comes to believe their own lies. And when reality rolls around — by definition, it always does — framework drops out from under the liar. The wicked help destroy themselves. It takes time.

Here, Krishna declares that whenever dharma declines, He manifests to reestablish it. Linked with the following verse, He asserts that those who understand the truth of His divine birth and actions, transcending rebirth, come to Him. The manifestation of divine duty leads to liberation for those who grasp the truth.

Approach Krishna:

Overview:

To approach Krishna is not merely to draw near to God but to embark on a transformative journey toward the higher Self, a journey marked by selfless action, profound understanding and spiritual liberation. This path, traveled by the practice of Karma Yoga, is not a mere philosophical abstraction but a practical, lived experience that elevates the human spirit from the mundane to the sublime.

Your dharma, your righteous duty, is to practice Karma Yoga. This practice, rooted in selfless service and the spontaneous relinquishment of desires and attachment to results, propels you toward God. In understanding His divine nature and birth, you begin to liberate yourself from the cyclic constraints of time, space and causation. The knowledge of Krishna's eternal and transcendent essence, His birth that defies the conventional bounds of mortality, offers a profound promise: liberation from the relentless cycle of birth and death.

As you serve others' desires, you move closer to Krishna. This movement is not one of mere physical proximity but of spiritual alignment. It is in knowing Krishna's divine birth, recognizing the eternal continuity shared with Him, that you begin to transcend the limitations of your existence and understanding. This knowledge is not theoretical; it is experiential, borne out of a deep, inner realization that transforms your perception and way of being.

The higher Self, once sucked into the muck of attachment, fear and anger, finds liberation through the purification that comes from uniting lower self within higher Self. In depending on Krishna's wisdom, you align your evolution with His divine guidance, attaining His Being. This liberation is not passive; it requires the active sacrifice of desire through selfless service. By

doing so, you dismantle the impediments that bind the mind to the lower self, allowing the higher Self to shine through in all its purity and clarity.

As you take the initiative to sacrifice desire — by serving others' desires — Krishna rewards you instantly. This reward manifests as liberation from the bondage to action and an elevation in both spiritual and material wellbeing. By choosing to sacrifice desire, you step onto a path that brings you closer to God, experiencing the profound rewards of purification and spiritual growth. This path, characterized by the union of the indulgent lower self with the abstemious higher Self, is a universal journey toward ultimate peace of mind.

In this approach to Krishna, the importance of understanding His divine nature cannot be overstated. It is this understanding that facilitates spiritual evolution and ultimate liberation. By knowing Krishna, you embrace a path that transcends the mundane, elevating your actions to the realm of the divine. The practice of Karma Yoga, therefore, is not just a duty; it is the very means by which you open the path to God and step forward along it.

In summary, to approach Krishna is to commit to a path of selfless action and consequent, profound understanding. It is to spontaneously recognize and internalize the divine nature of Krishna, allowing this knowledge to transform your existence. Through the practice of Karma Yoga, you align yourself with the eternal truths embodied by Krishna, moving ever closer to the goal of spiritual liberation and union with the divine. This journey offers the highest rewards: liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and the attainment of a state of eternal, divine continuity with Krishna.

4.09. He who knows the Truth of My Divine birth and actions, leaving the body he is not reborn. He comes to Me, Arjuna.

To 'know' the truth of His '*Divine birth and actions*,' we must have firsthand knowledge of liberation from time, space and causation (this chapter). When liberated from the relative field of life, birth and death are out of the question. We share eternal life with Krishna. '*He comes to me*,' the source of eternal continuity.

Here, Krishna emphasizes that knowing the truth of His divine birth leads to liberation. He elaborates on liberation, describing the liberated as free from attachment, fear, and anger. Taken together, these verses underscore the transformative power of understanding Krishna's divine nature in achieving spiritual freedom and contentment (following verse).

4.10. *Liberated from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, depending on Me, purified by the austerity of knowledge, many have attained My Being.*

Desire is the culprit and the root cause of '*attachment, fear and anger.*'
[Desire is also necessary for life and evolution (3.38).]

Attachment: through desire, attractive qualities found in objects of the senses draw attention to the happiness promised "out there" in the relative field of life (2.39).

Fear: fear of failure is born of desiring success in the duality of success and failure (2.45, 2.47).

Anger: anger arises from colliding desires (2.62 - 2.63, 3.37).

No desire, no attachment, no fear, no anger. Hence, sacrificing desire by serving others' desires liberates from '*attachment, fear and anger.*' The liberated mind becomes absorbed in fulfilling contentment of higher Self (2.46), '*absorbed in Me*' as transcendent. '*Depending on Me*' reminds Arjuna of Krishna's Supreme Knowledge and the importance of His teaching. [See also verse 2.61. '*Me as Supreme.*' For He alone is someone to whom the seeker can turn.]

Austerity: In higher Self we live austere to worldly pleasures of lower self. '*Purified by the austerity of knowledge*' we know '*the Truth about the role Gunas play, knowing Gunas act upon the Gunas*' (3.28). Knowing this Truth, we naturally experience the Self separate from the worldly pleasures we enjoy on the surface of the mind.

[As we shall soon see (4.18 – 4.42), complete knowledge is based on seeing Oneness in all and becoming familiar with all. In full knowledge we live austere to doubting nature, consequence of action, committing sin, possessions, and in fact, to all doing (4.13).]

Through the practice of Karma Yoga — sacrificing desire by serving others' desires — '*many have attained My Being.*' Having gained Cosmic Consciousness and jumped the hurdle of bondage to action, '*He comes to me.*' He naturally and quickly evolves to union with Me as a matter of course (previous verse; 4.13). '*Many*' reinforces the notion that spiritual evolution is open to all and achievable (2.40).

In this verse, Krishna emphasizes that those who know the truth of His divine nature, liberated from attachment, fear, and anger, attain His Being. In the following verse, He reveals that as individuals approach Him through selfless

actions, He rewards them, and people worldwide naturally follow the path of such selfless actions.

4.11. *As men approach Me, so do I reward them; men everywhere, Arjuna, follow My path.*

'Men approach me.' We take the initiative. In choosing to sacrifice desire, we step closer to His Being by liberating ourselves from *'attachment, fear and anger'* (previous verse) and so, through growth in consciousness, *'approach Me.'*

'I reward them.' *'My path'* is purification gained through austerity; we travel down the path of austerity by increasing separation between Absolute higher Self and indulgent lower self (previous verse). As we approach Him, separation widens. His Being of complete separation dawns.

'Men everywhere follow My path' by naturally traveling toward the ultimate peace of mind (*'happiness,'* 2.66), which can only exist in complete separation from indulgent lower self. That is, we take the path of austerity to Austerity. [*'My path'* is duty in service to others (3.08, 3.31), the practice of Karma Yoga. *'Men'* perform duty. Hence, *'men everywhere follow My path.'*]

Here, Krishna emphasizes the importance of understanding the truth of His divine nature, affirming that those who do not experience rebirth achieve union with Him. This knowledge leads to liberation. He advises making offerings to the gods, emphasizing sacrificial action for swift success in worldly endeavors (following verse).

Know Krishna:

Overview:

To "Know Krishna" is to embark on a journey to the Self, guided by the steady light of divine wisdom. Krishna, the eternal non-doer, manifests His presence through His teachings, aiming to lead us toward a life of selfless action and ultimate liberation. Similarly, Brahman's role — Brahman being the cause of all change that does not change at all, and the essence of the universe, the golden glue that holds all together — is not an active participant in the world's events but as the underlying force that empowers creation, urging us to understand the profound truths of existence and our place within it.

Krishna's teachings emphasize the importance of sacrificial actions. Through the practice of Karma Yoga — selfless service and the sacrifice of personal desires — we align ourselves with the divine order. This practice is not merely a path of duty; it is the essence of spiritual living. By sacrificing our desires, we dismantle the chains that bind our minds to the lower self, allowing the higher Self to emerge through it in its purest form. This path leads us to experience the rewards of purification and spiritual growth, moving us closer to Krishna's Being.

Understanding Krishna as the eternal non-doer is crucial. He is the force behind creation, yet He remains detached from the actions and their outcomes. This realization liberates us from the bondage of action, allowing us to live in a state of eternal contentment. By knowing Krishna in this way, we achieve a profound understanding of the nature of reality and our role within it. Actions performed with the understanding and experience of Krishna's divine nature do not bind us; instead, they become a means of attaining spiritual liberation.

Krishna's message is clear: perform selfless acts of service, follow the path of Karma Yoga and understand the eternal truths He embodies. By doing so, we align ourselves with the divine, achieving success and fulfillment in life. This path, practiced by the ancients, is a timeless journey toward ultimate peace of mind and spiritual evolution.

In summary, to know Krishna is to embrace a path of profound understanding through selfless action. It is to see His divine nature in the higher Self and allow this experience of Him to transform our existence. Through the practice of Karma Yoga, we move ever closer to the goal of spiritual liberation, attaining a state of eternal continuity with Krishna. This journey offers the highest rewards: liberation from the cycle of birth and death and union with the divine.

4.12. Desiring fulfillment of action here on earth, make offerings to the gods. Through sacrificial action, success comes quickly in the world of men.

'Make offerings to the gods' means to show them gratitude; gratitude nurtures the gods — and us (3.11). 'Brought into being by Sacrifice [of desire], the gods will truly bestow the enjoyment you desire (3.12). That is, 'Through sacrificial action, success comes quickly in the world of men.'

Here, Krishna advises performing actions with offerings to the gods — the subtle forces of Nature that carry out the mechanics of evolution by guiding the gunas of Nature — for success. He reinforces this in the following verse,

explaining that he created the fourfold order and is the eternal non-doer. Actions do not bind Him, emphasizing the importance of understanding the nature of action and the concept of the eternal non-doer.

4.13. *I created the fourfold order according to the shared roles of the Gunas and their pairings. Although I authored all this, know Me to be the eternal non-doer.*

'All this' refers to the 'fourfold order' and relative existence created by it.

Gunas create *via* the 'fourfold order.' Fourfold refers to the four ways the three Gunas pair. The three Gunas can pair in six ways. But two do not support progressive development and evolution: 1) Sattva dominates Tamas and 2) Tamas dominates Sattva. Suffice to say, all action manifests from 'the fourfold order' to create only good which supports evolution [*'Brahman arises from the imperishable'* unmanifest pure consciousness (3.15).]

'Although I authored [empowered] all this, know me to be the eternal non-doer.' The Gunas of Nature created 'all this,' not Me. By combining their different unchangeable qualities, the Gunas initiate change and creation via the 'fourfold order.'

Non-doing is the highest austerity. 'Know Me to be the eternal non-doer' is an invitation to 'attain my Being' through the austerity of knowledge (4.10).

Here, Krishna asserts that although He is the empowering force behind creation, He remains a non-doer. In the following verse, He declares that actions leave no impression on Him, emphasizing His detachment from the fruits of action. This knowledge, when understood, liberates us from bondage to action, as articulated in the following verse.

4.14. *Actions do not leave an impression on Me; I have no desire for the fruits of action. Thus, he who knows Me is not bound by action.*

'Know me to be the non-doer' and therefore, I take no actions ('though I empower them,' previous verse). Hence, 'Actions do not leave an impression on Me' and engender future actions.

I need nothing; I am 'the eternal non-doer'; I did not desire any of 'this' (previous verse). Hence, 'I have no desire for the fruits of action.' [In fact, we desire and create all this (7.04)]

'Thus, he who knows me' as the non-doer has firsthand knowledge of non-doing. He has achieved the highest austerity and lives eternally in fulfilling contentment (previous verse). Like Me, he *'is not bound by action.'*

Here, Krishna emphasizes His non-involvement in actions, stating, *'Actions do not leave an impression on Me.'* This sets the stage for the following verse, where He urges Arjuna to understand the ancients' practice of Karma Yoga, emphasizing selfless sacrifice of desire and action. The ancients, through such practice, regained natural balance in life and society.

4.15. *Knowing this, the ancients seeking relief, performed action; therefore, perform actions as the ancients earlier performed them.*

'*Knowing this*' refers to knowing actions do not involve Me (previous verse) through understanding and experience.

'*Seeking relief*' means seeking liberation from bondage to action (previous verse).

'*The ancients*' refers back to Vivaswat, Manu and Ikshwaku, etc. in verse 4.01.

The ancients performed Karma Yoga, which *'I have affirmed to you today'* (4.03). They did their duty by sacrificing desire, liberating themselves from *'attachment, fear and anger'* (4.10). The ancients followed My path of austerity (4.10), separated higher Absolute Self from the indulgent lower self. I rewarded them with the high austerity of non-doing (4.13) and eternal contentment in My Being (4.10).

By *'therefore, perform actions as the ancients earlier performed them,'* Krishna offers a concrete example of right action and its *'rewards'* (4.11), and He implores Arjuna to follow the example set by *'the ancients.'* [See verses 3.20 – 3.25 for the importance of example.] The ancients fulfilled their duty, performed skillful and dynamic right actions by serving their subjects, and consequently, success came quickly to them (4.12). Having become absorbed in Me, they achieved the state of non-doing (4.13), beyond desire for fruits of action (previous verse). Freed from bondage, they know Me and share my austere experience of non-doing in eternal contentment (previous verse).

The take-home message: act as did the ancients. Practice Karma Yoga.

Krishna encourages Arjuna to understand the nature of action and nonaction. In the subsequent verse, Krishna reassures Arjuna that even the wise find these concepts confusing. He promises to explain the intricacies, providing knowledge that will liberate Arjuna from the dilemma of committing sin through clarified understanding of action.

Know action:

Overview:

Krishna, in His divine wisdom, delves into the profound nuances of action, nonaction and wrong action to guide us toward a deeper understanding and liberation from the bondage of sin and confusion.

Krishna's discourse begins with recognizing the universal perplexity surrounding action. Even the wise, He acknowledges, are often ensnared in the complexities of distinguishing between action and nonaction — nonactive Self that witnesses desire, action and life unfolding. This acknowledgment serves as a compassionate reassurance to Arjuna — and to us all — that confusion in these matters is a shared human experience. Krishna elucidates this enigma, offering understanding and experience that will liberate Arjuna from his existential dilemma and enable him to act with clarity and righteousness.

The essence of action, as Krishna reveals, is not merely in the physical acts themselves but in the underlying intentions and the awareness that accompanies them. To know action fully, one must also know nonaction and wrong action. This triad of understanding is essential, for the course of action is indeed unfathomable and resists simplistic categorizations of good and bad karma.

Krishna's teachings emphasize that true wisdom — wisdom guides action to higher wellbeing — lies in recognizing the unity of action and nonaction. He who perceives nonaction in action and action in nonaction is deemed wise, a Yogi who has transcended conventional dualities. This perspective is rooted in seeing the Oneness of Brahman, the all-encompassing essence of the universe. Brahman, unchanging yet the cause of all change, infuses every action with its divine presence. Thus, every action, when seen through the lens of Brahman's Oneness, becomes an expression of this ultimate unity.

In practical terms, this wisdom translates into a life free from the bondage of desire and incentive. The wise, having seen the Oneness in all, act without attachment to the fruits of their actions. Their acts are consumed in the fire of

knowledge, a metaphor for the purification that comes from realizing the true nature of reality: imperishable Oneness underlying perishable reality. This state of detached action, or Karma Yoga, leads to fulfillment and independence, as the individual no longer seeks external rewards but finds completeness within.

Krishna urges us to follow the example of the ancients, who performed their duties with selfless dedication, liberating themselves from attachment, fear and anger. By sacrificing desire and acting for the greater good, they achieved a state of non-doing — a profound inner peace and eternal contentment in union with the Divine while engaged in action.

Thus, to know action is to transcend the superficial layers of activity and delve into the deeper currents of intentionality and awareness. It is to see beyond the immediate outcomes and actually see the eternal backlight of Brahman's Oneness in every thing. In this realization, we find liberation from the bondage of action, attaining a state of harmony with Divine will.

Krishna's teachings on action guide us toward a life of purpose and grace, where every action is a step on the path to spiritual evolution and liberation. By embracing this wisdom, we align ourselves with the eternal rhythm of the universe, finding peace during action and stillness in the heart of activity.

4.16. What is action? What is nonaction? Even the wise are confused in these matters. Action I will explain to you, knowing which you will be freed from committing sin.

4.17. One should know the nature of action. Wrong action and nonaction should be known also. Unfathomable is the course of action.

Krishna has consistently beseeched Arjuna to act. But action, nonaction, wrong action, and the course of action as they relate to '*committing sin*' continue to confuse Arjuna. Krishna tells Arjuna not to worry about it and so deepen his despair, '*Even the wise are confused in these matters.*'

Only within the context of knowledge (revealed in the following verse) can the field of action be fully valued and integrated into duty. In the remaining verses of this chapter, '*I will explain to you*' the knowledge which has heretofore not been addressed. With this blessing of complete knowledge, Arjuna '*will be freed from committing sin*' and consequently, finally be freed from confusion and inaction. Only in knowledge — and only then — will he be able to act '*freed from committing sin.*'

'Unfathomable is the course of action' lays to waste the notion of knowing courses of action as either “good karma” or “bad karma.”

Krishna acknowledges the confusion surrounding action and nonaction. In the following verse, He unveils the knowledge gained by seeing nonaction in action and vice versa, uniting the dualities. This realization makes one a wise Yogi, accomplished in all actions, transcending the conventional understanding of action and nonaction — and knowing all.

See Oneness of Brahman:

Overview:

The concept of Brahman stands as an immutable pillar, a serene beacon guiding seekers toward the ultimate truth. To see — to actually see — the Oneness of Brahman in everything is to peer through the veil of illusion and recognize the interconnected fabric of existence. This realization, profound and transformative, reveals that Brahman, the divine essence, pervades all creation, transcending the apparent diversity of the world.

The journey toward seeing the Oneness of Brahman in everything begins with dispelling of ignorance. Much like the rising sun banishes the darkness of night, divine knowledge illuminates the omnipresence of Brahman. When one's ignorance is vanquished, the reality of the transcendent becomes clear, akin to a landscape unveiled by the morning light. The enlightened, those who have rooted their intellect in Brahman, cleanse their selves through knowledge, reaching beyond the cycle of rebirth to the goal of spiritual liberation. This purification process reveals the underlying unity in all experiences, emphasizing that the Gunas of Nature are the true source of action.

The enlightened see Brahman's Oneness in every aspect of creation, transcending superficial distinctions. Whether in a learned sage, a humble cow or even a seemingly lost soul, they recognize the same divine essence. This vision of Oneness fosters an equanimity that liberates one from the dualities of joy and sorrow, success and failure. Those who see — actually see — Brahman's Oneness in all things innocently renounce egoism's attachment to action, knowing that true mastery of life comes from aligning oneself with the natural flow of the universe, guided by the higher Self.

This perspective — seeing Oneness backlighting all things — brings enduring happiness, one that is not swayed by the fleeting pleasures of sensory experiences. The enlightened, unmoved by external sensations, find

happiness within the Self, united with Brahman through the Yoga of action, Karma Yoga. This internalized happiness, stemming from seeing Brahman's omnipresence, is imperishable and profound, contrasting sharply with the transient nature of worldly pleasures.

As one's experience of seeing Brahman's Oneness in all deepens, the agitation born of desires and anger naturally diminishes. The force of these emotions, driven by the restless quality of Rajoguna, is subdued by the steady light of seeing Brahman's Oneness behind it. Those who resist this agitation are naturally Self-disciplined, experiencing a state of contentment and inner peace. The Yogi discovers this eternal freedom in Brahman, symbolized by the serene flow of breath and the centering of attention at the spiritual core.

This inner peace is the culmination of a journey that transforms actions into expressions of the higher Self. Detached from the outcomes of actions, the Yogi performs all acts as offerings to Brahman, purifying the lower self and aligning with the cosmic purpose of eternal happiness. Such a life, lived in harmony with divine essence, is free from the taint of ego-driven actions and is exemplified by the metaphor of the lotus leaf — untouched by the waters it resides in.

In this serene state, the enlightened witness the divine play of Brahman in all things, seeing the eternal Oneness that binds the universe. They achieve an even vision, seeing no difference between the learned and the ignorant, the noble and the humble, for all are but expressions of the same underlying reality. This vision brings about a profound peace, a liberation from the cycles of desire and fear, and an enduring joy that is the true nature of Brahman.

To see the Oneness of Brahman is to embrace the essence of all life, to know that every action, every experience, is but a ripple in the vast ocean of the divine. It is a vision that transforms the mundane into the sacred, offering a glimpse of the eternal in every moment. Thus, the seeker becomes one with the source, finding ultimate peace and unending joy in the embrace of Brahman's infinite love from seeing it in all things.

4.18. He who sees nonaction in action and action in nonaction is wise among men. He is a Yogi. He has accomplished all actions.

Brahman is the all-encompassing essence of the universe and is present in everything. It is the cause of all change, fulfills change, but does not change

in itself. Brahman is the Golden Glue that holds everything together in the Oneness of Brahman (3.15).

Seeing Brahman's Oneness in everything, we see '*nonaction in action and action in nonaction*.' This Oneness permeates all aspects of action and creation. Action and nonaction are both full of Brahman's Oneness. Everything is full and everything is One. Seeing Brahman's Oneness in nonaction and in action unites the two; one who lives in union of the two is a Yogi.

Knowledge: seeing Oneness in all, we become familiar with all, we know all.

The following five verses expand on knowledge.

4.19. *He who has eliminated desire and incentive from all undertakings, his action consumed in the fire of knowledge, him the knowers of Reality call wise.*

The fire of knowledge — seeing Oneness in all, becoming familiar with all and consequently, knowing all (previous verse) — consumes all differences on the relative level of life. One who sees Oneness in all sees the underlying permanence in the reality of impermanence; him '*the knowers of Reality*' — those who see nonaction and action as One (previous verse) — call wise. This wisdom gained by seeing Brahman's fullness everywhere informs action to further spiritual and material wellbeing, eliminating the need for desire and incentive to achieve fullness through action.

4.20. *Having abandoned attachment to fruits of action, fulfilled, independent, even when engaged in action he does not act at all.*

Fulfilled in seeing Brahman's Oneness in all (previous two verses), we depend on nothing to achieve fulfillment: we are already there. Fulfilled, we abandon '*attachment to fruits of action*' and in this way, we become wholly independent of action to acquire fruit. Desires and actions go of their own accord; when disengaged from action deep within on the level of the Self, we do not engage in action at all.

4.21. *Performing actions by the body alone, his heart and mind disciplined, having abandoned motive for possessions, he incurs no sin.*

Disengaged from action (previous verse), we perform all actions by the body alone: from the level of nonactive Self we witness thoughts, desires and actions go of their own accord. Being familiar with all and knowing all disciplines heart (desire) and mind (incentive) in the fullness of seeing Oneness in all. Fulfilled and independent of action to acquire fruit of action, we abandon motive for possession. Actions running of their own accord and

desires and incentives dissolved, Nature's desire to evolve to higher levels of spiritual and material wellbeing motivates actions. Performing such right actions that support evolution, we incur no sinful wrong actions.

4.22. Content with whatever comes his way, transcending dualities, free from envy, balanced in success and failure, in actions he is not bound.

Having abandoned the motive for possessions (previous verse), we remain content deep within with whatever comes our way. Contentment in outcomes transcends dualities of success and failure. Liberated from the motive of possessing what others have (previous verse) frees us from envy. Balanced in success and failure of outcomes, frees us from bondage to actions to achieve them.

4.23. Freed from attachment, liberated, balanced, acting for the sake of sacrifice, his action is wholly dissolved.

The previous four verses addressed freedom from attachment, liberation from bondage to action, and sacrificing desire and incentive for the sake of feeling fulfilled within. Imbued with these positive qualities, that support life and evolution, dissolves all action in a sea of fulfillment. Actions not only run of their own accord (previous two verses), but when dissolved in a sea of fulfillment, actions themselves fulfill, seemingly without purpose other than fulfillment itself.

Sacrifice desire:

Overview:

The notion of sacrificing desire resonates profoundly. This idea finds a vivid and compelling expression in the *Bhagavad Gita*, particularly in verse 4.24, where the essence of sacrifice transcends mere ritual and becomes a means to attain a higher state of being.

To delve into this concept, one must understand that the act of sacrificing desire, as expounded by Krishna, is not about the renunciation of worldly pleasures for the sake of asceticism. Rather, it is a sublime transformation of desire into a force that propels us towards Self-realization and cosmic harmony. In this sacred dialogue, Krishna articulates a vision where every action, when performed with the spirit of sacrifice, becomes a conduit to the divine.

In this worldview, the act of sacrifice is not limited to grand gestures or significant religious rites. It extends to the minutiae of everyday life. When we cook a meal, help a neighbor or perform our professional duties with a sense

of dedication and selflessness, we engage in the sacred act of sacrifice. This perspective redefines our understanding of success and fulfillment, anchoring them in the spiritual rather than the material realm.

Sacrifice of desire, therefore, is not about suppressing our innate impulses but about redirecting them. It is about channeling our desires towards the wellbeing of others and the greater good. This redirection aligns us with a higher purpose, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and unity with the cosmos. When our actions are driven by selfless intent, we experience a profound inner transformation that leads to true contentment and peace.

Moreover, Krishna's teachings suggest that by sacrificing our personal desires, we nourish the subtle forces of Nature which in turn support and guide us. This reciprocal relationship underscores the interconnectedness of all life. It posits that our individual wellbeing is intrinsically linked to the welfare of the universe. Thus, by engaging in selfless actions, we contribute to the cosmic order and support the evolution of all beings.

This sacred exchange is further enriched by the practice of gratitude. By expressing gratitude for the blessings we receive, we deepen our connection to the divine and the natural world. Gratitude shifts our focus from what we lack to what we have, fostering a sense of abundance and fulfillment in the present. It frees us to live in the present moment, liberated from the anxieties of past regrets and worries about the future, and aligns us with the flow of life.

Ultimately, the sacrifice of desire is a path to liberation from sin of actions that retard evolution. Sacrifice is a journey that transcends the ephemeral pleasures of the material world and leads to a deeper, more enduring state of joy. By offering our desires and acting in the service of others, we realize our highest potential and experience the true essence of life.

In conclusion, Krishna's message in this verse is a powerful reminder that the essence of life lies in selfless service and the recognition of the divine in every action. It challenges us to look beyond the superficial and embrace a way of living that is rooted in love, compassion, a deep sense of purpose, and gratitude. Through the sacrifice of desire, we achieve a state of harmony with the universe, fulfilling our destiny and attaining the ultimate goal of Self-realization.

4.24. Brahman is the offering. Brahman is the oblation poured out of Brahman into the fire that is Brahman. Brahman is realized by him who sees Brahman in all action.

'*Offering*': that which is most precious to sustaining life, evolution and daily living; desire (3.38).

'*Oblation*': means for letting go of the offering; the means for sacrificing desire; the different kinds of sacrificial acts.

'*Fire*': attachment to offering consumed in the fire of knowledge. [Knowledge is defined in verses 4.18 and again in 4.33.]

'*Brahman*': Brahman causes all to exist; Brahman is the pervasive and eternal Truth unifying all reality; Brahman is in everything; Brahman is now; Brahman is the Golden Glue of it all; Brahman is the Oneness we see in all diversity of existence (3.15, 4.18).

In practicing Karma Yoga, desire, serving others' desires and breaking the cycle of impression-desire-action are respectively separate actions composing 1) offering, 2) oblation and 3) fire.

But Brahman infuses all actions. Consequently, Brahman infuses action of offering, action of oblation and action of fire. Karma Yoga is the direct means to sacrificing desire and seeing Oneness in its 1) offering (of desire), 2) oblation (serving others' desires) and 3) fire (breaking bondage to action). In this way, the practice of Karma Yoga, with Oneness infusing its three aspects, is the great opportunity to gain complete knowledge by seeing Oneness and gaining familiarity with all: knowing all.

Following verses (4.25 - 4.30) illustrate lesser variations on Yoga of action. '*Offering*' and '*fire*' — desire and consuming attachment born of it — are common to all sacrificial actions. Variations differ only in '*oblation*,' that is, differ only in the means for sacrificing desire.

4.25. Some Yogis perform sacrifice to the gods and others offer sacrifice by sacrifice itself into the fire of Brahman.

'*Some Yogis perform sacrifice to the gods.*' Performing sacrifice invokes acts of gratitude. Gratitude lets go of desires to achieve happiness and contentment in the material world. The refined quality of gratitude draws attention inwards to refined levels of awareness where, finally, attention is consumed in the Self. The same is true for '*others by offering sacrifice into the fire that is Brahman.*' Through seeing Oneness in Brahman, we let go of desire and '*the fire that is Brahman*' consumes it.

4.26. *Some offer oblation as hearing and other senses in the fires of control; some others offer sound and other objects of senses into the fires of senses.*

Gandharva Veda replicates the rhythms of Nature. The soothing melodies of Gandharva balance the senses and restore inner peace. In listening to the rhythms of Nature our attention turns inward; we follow the mind's natural tendency to find happiness within and we experience refined levels of awareness. These melodic '*fires of control*' sacrifice attachment to turbulent senses and let go of worldly desires that draw attention outward.

'*Some others offer sound ... into the fires of senses*' refers to the actions musicians take in performing music that restores balance. Putting attention on producing natural rhythms in tune with Nature, they let go of worldly desires '*into the fires of the senses.*' Their organs of action operate on the level of Nature. Their attention turns within toward refined levels of awareness.

'*Other objects of senses*': taste (spices, herbs, ayurvedic diet), smell (aromatherapy), sight (light therapy; architecture; abstract art), and touch (massage, oils) also restore inner peace and balance by letting go of worldly desires.

4.27. *Still others offer activities of the senses and of the vital-breath in the fire of Yoga, which is self-control kindled by knowledge.'*

'*Which is self-control kindled by knowledge.*' A life of character leads to a life of virtue. When we understand universal Truths — for example, the 10 Commandments — we act in righteous ways to incorporate those Truths into our lives. We let go of desire for lesser modes of behavior and the worldly pleasures they seek. '*Self-control*' in following understanding of righteousness guides our actions toward the greater good of a universal Truth.

'*Others offer the activities of the senses and vital-breath in the fire of Yoga.*' Through natural right actions (right actions obviate, that is, consume, wrong actions; 2.47) taken in pursuit of Truth, they burn up wrong actions and lesser intentions '*in the fire of Yoga.*' Truth illuminates what the senses experience in Oneness and thus, infuses strength into '*vital-breath*' [the purpose of] seeking Oneness, letting go of desire and torching it.

4.28. *Some offer as sacrifice their material possessions, by austerity and by the practice of Yoga. While other aesthetics of severe vows offer study of the scriptures and knowledge.*

'Offer sacrifice as their material possessions' means to give away possessions to the deserving. Material possessions point attention outwards toward the world of relative change and sensual pleasure. The mind freed from possessions follows its natural tendency for greater happiness, lets go of desires and turns within toward more refined levels of awareness on the level of the Self.

Here, '*by austerity*' means to sacrifice grosser levels of activity which are part and parcel of living in the material world. '*By austerity*' we let go of desire, purify the body, integrate physical and mental systems, and operate at more refined levels.

'*By the practice of Yoga*' means taking actions that fail to register deep impressions on the mind. By breaking the cycle of impression-desire-action we let go of desire. The contented higher Self naturally draws attention inward, achieving steadiness and inner peace.

By '*other aesthetics of severe vows offer study of the scriptures and knowledge*' means to sacrifice lesser activities in the material world and put attention on the study of Nature through scripture. Through the mental activity of intellectually understanding how the *Gunas act upon the Gunas* (3.28) at the most refined levels of Nature, '*aesthetics of severe vows*' torch desire.

4.29. *Others, pour the inward breath into the outward and the outward breath into the inward, restraining the paths of inhalation and exhalation.*

The action of alternatively breathing through one nostril and the other naturally focuses attention on the inward and outward flow of breath. At the gap between breaths, when we release from '*restraining the paths of inhalation and exhalation,*' we let go of desire, our attention frees itself from action and in its relaxed state, naturally falls back on the Self.

4.30. *Yet others, who have restricted their foods, offer breaths into breaths. All these know sacrifice, and through sacrifice, they cast away sins.*

Restricting foods means restricting intake. We have less to process. Metabolism slows. The nervous system settles down. Breathing refines. We let go of desire. Attention turns within. All who perform these sacrificial acts (*'all these'* of the previous verses) direct attention toward living in the present. In the present, we let go of desires, the past dissolves and we cast away all sins from past actions — *'his action is wholly dissolved'* (4.23) — into the *'fire'* of knowledge (4.24).

4.31. *Enjoying the nectar, which is remains of sacrifice, they reach primal Brahman. This world is not for him who offers no sacrifice, how then other worlds hereafter?*

Sacrificial acts of offering, oblation and fire (4.24) leave the practitioner with the sweet feeling of familiarity from seeing Oneness of Brahman in all. This *'remains of sacrifice'* — that is, familiarity with all — verifies the practice and guides the practitioner toward *'the eternal Brahman.'*

This world offers the means — sacrifice of desire (3.09 - 3.10) — to enjoy the sweet nectar of familiarity. Those who *'offer no sacrifice'* of desire in *'this world'* fail to *'reach [familiarity with all and] the primal Brahman.'* They lack knowledge and fail to feel at home in this world. How can they feel at home in worlds to come?

In this and the following verse, Krishna elucidates the profound nature of sacrificial actions in Karma Yoga. He emphasizes that despite their apparent separateness, the actions of offering, oblation and fire are infused with Brahman. These verses lay the foundation for understanding the significance of knowledge as the superior form of sacrifice.

4.32. *Sacrifices of many kinds achieve Brahman. Know all sacrifice to be born of action. Knowing this you will find liberation.*

The act of sacrificing desire is oblation. *'Sacrifices [oblations] are of many kinds,'* to include those addressed in verses 4.25 – 4.30. *'Know all sacrifice to be born of action,'* that is know them all born of Brahman, the root cause of action (4.18). *'Knowing this [by understanding and experiencing Oneness of Brahman in all creation] 'you will find liberation.'* That is, to achieve liberation all Arjuna needs to do is serve others' desires: Stand up! Fight! The path of liberation to seeing Oneness of Brahman is just that easily traveled.

Krishna asserts that various sacrifices lead to Brahman and understanding them dispels doubt. The following verse then declares the supremacy of the sacrifice of knowledge, asserting that all actions increase knowledge. This verse encourages embracing the direct path of Karma Yoga, where serving others' desires becomes an infallible means to relinquishing personal desires and gaining knowledge.

Take the direct path:

Overview:

“Take the direct path.” This simple yet profound instruction encapsulates the essence of a journey towards spiritual realization and ultimate truth. The direct path is not just a route we take but a conscious choice to align our actions with the highest principles of duty, selflessness and unwavering commitment to the greater good.

At its core, the direct path emphasizes the practice of Karma Yoga, the Yoga of action. Unlike the path of renunciation, which focuses on withdrawing from worldly activities, Karma Yoga involves engaging fully in life's duties and responsibilities. It is about performing our actions with dedication and service, where the emphasis is on the action itself rather than the fruits it yields. By immersing ourselves in selfless service, we purify our hearts and minds, allowing the light of the higher Self to shine through.

The *Bhagavad Gita* illustrates that the direct path — traveled by men and women of action carrying out familial and social responsibilities — is superior because it seamlessly integrates spiritual practice with everyday life. Krishna extols the virtues of this path, asserting that both renunciation and action lead to the highest happiness. However, the Yoga of action is more practical and accessible, especially for those engaged in the world. By fulfilling our duties and serving others, we connect with a deeper reality, transcending our individual desires and ego.

As we navigate through life, we encounter numerous crossroads where we must choose between what is easy and what is right. These moments are pivotal, shaping our destiny and defining our character. The right path often demands courage, integrity and a steadfast commitment to truth. It calls for wisdom and compassion, guiding us to act in harmony with our higher Self. By choosing the path of selfless action — Karma Yoga — we align ourselves with the divine order and contribute to the wellbeing of all beings.

The journey on the direct path is not solitary. We walk alongside fellow seekers, each on their own path, yet interconnected by our shared pursuit of truth and enlightenment. Our experiences may vary, but our destination is the same: the realization of our divine nature and the fulfillment of our highest potential. The sincerity, dedication and love we bring to our journey shape our growth and transform our lives.

Krishna elucidates that abstaining from action is not the key to nonaction. True nonaction is the state of being naturally detached from the outcomes of our actions — instantly achieved in serving others' desires — performing our duties with a pure heart and clear mind. This teaching challenges us to rethink our approach to life. It is not enough to withdraw from the world; we must engage with it fully, but with a spirit of selflessness.

The path of action is about serving others and sacrificing our desires for the greater good. This practice of Karma Yoga leads to a harmonious union of the lower self with the higher Self. Through this union, we transcend the bondage of desires and achieve a state of eternal liberation and imperishable happiness.

By taking the direct path, we align ourselves with divine purpose and experience a profound sense of peace and fulfillment. We see the Oneness of all existence and delight in the welfare of all beings. This path leads to the highest realization of the Self and the attainment of Brahman Consciousness.

In conclusion, the direct path is a call to action. It is an invitation to live with purpose and integrity, to serve others selflessly, and to naturally align our actions with the divine order. By embracing this path, we find true fulfillment and everlasting peace, realizing our highest potential and contributing to the greater good of all.

4.33. Sacrifice of knowledge is superior to sacrifice through material means, Arjuna. All actions, without exception, increase knowledge.

See verses 4.18 – 4.22 to understand seeing Brahman's Oneness in all.

Definition of 'Knowledge': See Oneness in all; feel familiar with all; know all. That is, "Seeing is believing, but feeling is the truth," Thomas Fuller.

Previous verses showed 1) in all oblation we sacrifice desire (4.25 – 4.30); 2) the reward for sacrifice of desire is the sweet familiarity of seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, feeling familiar with all and knowing all (4.31); 3) all sacrifice of desire is born of action (previous verse).

So...

Q: What is the most efficient and effective action to sacrifice desire, achieve familiarity of seeing Brahman's Oneness in all and ultimately, knowing all? A: '*Sacrifice of knowledge.*'

Material means: The oblation for '*sacrifice [of desire] through material means*' requires action to settle the mind and indirectly, relinquish desire. Oblation through '*material means*' is a multistep process (examples 4.25 - 4.30): physical and mental actions inform physiology, which in turn settles the mind, which in turn relinquishes desire. Unfortunately, '*material means*' engender impediments of fear of breaking rules — and fear snuffs out the subtle power of sacrifice to settle the mind. In addition, the execution and effectiveness of the action depend on expertise and conditions amenable to the action performed. Instruction and know-how are essential; timing and location must be considered. For example, expertly performing breathing exercises (4.29) at the dinner table would be difficult, rude, ineffective, and unlikely to relinquish desires — and bad for digestion.

On the other hand...

Sacrifice of knowledge: Selfless actions (Ch 2 and 3) raise consciousness to seeing Oneness in all, to familiarity with all and knowing all. Consequently, sacrifice of desire and action directly increase knowledge. Hence, in the practice of Karma Yoga (4.24), '*Sacrifice of knowledge*' is sacrifice that directly leads to knowledge. You cannot do two things at once. In the instant you serve others' desires you sacrifice your own. Completely. It is an infallible, rules-free and one-step process to relinquishing desire, anytime and anywhere. Sacrificing desire through selfless service is part of the human condition (3.10): everyone is an expert (4.10). Through understanding (Ch 2) and experience (Ch3) achieved through renouncing and sacrificing desires we gain knowledge in Cosmic Consciousness (this chapter).

'*All actions, without exception, increase knowledge.*' Brahman is the root of all action. Consequently, Brahman pervades all actions. Therefore, all actions advance to seeing Brahman's Oneness in all (4.18), feeling familiar with all (4.31) and knowing all (this verse). By performing right actions — serving others' desires — we naturally integrate some measure of Oneness into our lives, increasing knowledge. This is especially true for witnessing action in Cosmic Consciousness, where we sacrifice our desire and action for Nature's desire and noninvolvement in action.

Krishna extols the superiority of sacrificing of knowledge in Karma Yoga, asserting that all actions — especially sacrificial ones (3.15) — without exception, increase knowledge. He encourages Arjuna to seek wisdom from those who perceive the Truth of Reality. Krishna emphasizes the transformative power of knowledge and advises Arjuna to approach wise teachers with humility, inquiry and service — that is, sacrifice desire (following verse).

Others will teach you:

Overview:

Knowledge: seeing Oneness in all, we feel familiar with all, we know all.

Others will teach you: Know this! Through humble submission, inquiry, and service, the knowing ones who perceive the Truth of Reality will teach you knowledge — the understanding and experience of Self-realization. The Truth of Reality is seeing Oneness in all creation, recognizing the permanent within the impermanent. These wise teachers, familiar with all, understand and embody Brahman's Oneness in everything. As you walk the path of evolution, these knowing ones will manifest in your life, guiding you toward deeper understanding and liberation.

In this profound teaching, Krishna emphasizes the transformative power of knowledge. By approaching wise teachers with humility, sincere questions and a spirit of service, you open yourself to receive their wisdom. This act of submission is not about diminishing oneself but about recognizing the value of wisdom that transcends egoism and desires. It is through this submission and service that one sacrifices the attachment to worldly pleasures, aligning oneself with higher truths.

Such actions — humble submission, inquiry and service — are sacrifices of egoism. They represent a deliberate choice to prioritize spiritual growth over material gain. In this sacrifice, all actions contribute to the accumulation of knowledge, but sacrificial actions do so to a greater extent. By engaging in these acts, you fulfill the meaning of sacrifice and gain the support of Nature in achieving wellbeing. This harmonious alignment with Nature's Gunas brings about a sense of inner peace and clarity, dispelling the delusions that cloud your perception of reality.

Krishna assures Arjuna that true knowledge dispels delusion, allowing one to see the unity of all beings in the Self and in Him. This knowledge is a purifying force, leading to Supreme Peace. Doubt and a doubting nature are

obstacles to spiritual progress, while faith and devotion pave the way to liberation. By recognizing the unity of all existence, you transcend the illusion of separation and perceive the interconnectedness of all life; and through direct experience, foster faith.

In essence, this teaching calls upon you to seek out and learn from those who have realized the Truth of Reality: the nonactive higher Self separate from active lower self permeated with its eternal contentment. Their guidance illuminates your path, helping you to see beyond the superficial divisions of the material world and understand the deeper, unifying essence of existence: Oneness. Through their wisdom, you will come to see all beings in your Self and in Krishna, attaining a state of inner harmony and peace.

4.34. Know this! Through humble submission, inquiry and service, the knowing ones who perceive the Truth of Reality will teach you knowledge.

'Knowledge' was defined in the previous verse.

'The Truth of Reality' is seeing Oneness in all reality.

'The knowing ones who perceive the Truth of Reality' see Brahman's Oneness in all creation. Familiar with all, they know all.

The Truth of Reality is seeing Brahman's Oneness in all reality, seeing the permanent within the impermanent. The knowing ones who perceive the Truth of Reality see Brahman's Oneness in all creation. Familiar with all, they know all.

By humble submission, inquiry, and service we sacrifice our desire for worldly pleasures to serve those who sacrifice desire to teach others sacrifice of desire. All actions, without exception, increase knowledge, sacrificial actions more so. Acts of humble submission, inquiry and service fulfill the meaning of sacrifice and consequently, gain support of Nature to fulfill wellbeing. The knowing ones will manifest along your path of evolution. In reading this, they already have.

In this and the following verse, Krishna assures Arjuna that true knowledge dispels delusion, allowing one to perceive the unity of all beings in the Self and in Krishna. Knowledge becomes the purifying force, leading to Supreme Peace. Doubt and a doubting nature hinder spiritual progress, while faith and devotion pave the way to liberation.

Know the Truth:

Overview:

During our daily lives, bustling with activity and distraction, there lies an imperative truth: seeing the Oneness of Brahman in all things. This profound experience is not merely a philosophical ideal but a practical guide to living in harmony with the universe, and it is through this truth that we come to know everything, feel at home with all, and transcend the binds of ignorance and sin.

To know the truth is to see Brahman's Oneness in every aspect of reality. Imagine a serene morning by a lake, where the mist slowly lifts as the sun rises, unveiling the inherent beauty of the landscape. This moment of clarity mirrors our journey towards enlightenment. When we grasp the truth, the illusions that cloud our perception — born of desires and fears — disappear, and we see the world as it truly is: unified, harmonious and complete.

Seeing Brahman's Oneness in everything is akin to recognizing a universal familiarity. When we see Oneness in all, we feel familiar with all, we know all. In this state of pure knowledge, every being, every object and every action resonates with a sense of profound connection: Oneness. When we look at others, we no longer see strangers but reflections of the Self, echoes of our own existence intertwined with the fabric of the cosmos. This familiarity breeds a deep, intrinsic knowledge, for to know one thing truly is to know all, as all are but expressions of the same ultimate reality, Brahman.

This knowledge is not passive; it is transformative. It acts as a purifier, cleansing the mind of delusions and impurities. Krishna assures us that even the most sinful sinners can overcome their past actions through the purifying power of knowledge. Just as fire reduces wood to ashes, knowledge incinerates the effects of all actions, liberating us from the cycle of cause and effect. In this purified state, we live in the eternal present, unburdened by past actions or anxieties about the future.

Furthermore, Krishna emphasizes that there is no purifier equal to knowledge. This pure knowledge, once attained, dispels all doubts and misconceptions. It brings supreme peace, a state of unwavering tranquility and contentment. The practice of Karma Yoga — selfless action performed with the awareness of Brahman's Oneness — facilitates this attainment. By serving others and sacrificing our desires, we align our actions with the

natural order of the universe — Brahman — enhancing our understanding and experience of this ultimate truth.

In conclusion, knowing the truth — seeing the Oneness of Brahman backlighting all, therefore feeling familiar with all and knowing all — transforms our perception, actions and existence. It fosters a sense of universal familiarity, dispels delusions, purifies the mind, and leads to supreme inner peace. Feeling familiar with all, we know all. This knowledge, indeed, is the greatest purifier, capable of overcoming all sinfulness and bringing us into harmony with the eternal present. In this state, we find true wellbeing, connectedness and final liberation from the bondage of action.

4.35. Knowing this, you will never again fall into delusion, Arjuna; by that knowledge you will see all beings in your Self and also in Me.

To understand ‘*you will see all beings in your Self and also in Me*,’ use the Sun as a metaphor for higher Self. The Sun is the source of our solar system. Most of what we experience comes from the Sun and its gravity: planets, earth, water, beings, mountain ranges, parking tickets, and our bodies and mind. So, in effect, the essence of the Sun resides in everything we experience, including our lower self. And being the source of everything, everything — in its potential — resides in the Sun (‘*you will see all beings in the Self*’). ‘*And also in Me*’ because all creation is ‘*My material nature divided eightfold*’ (7.04); that is, the creator created the Sun. Hence, ‘*also in Me*.’ Note, in verse 6.29 this verse expands to ‘*with even vision he sees the Self in all beings and sees all beings present in the Self*.’

Krishna states that all creation manifests out of Brahman. Thus, Brahman is present in everything. Krishna expands on the notion that one who sees with clarity sees Oneness of Brahman within all beings and sees all beings within the Self.

‘*Knowing this*,’ seeing the Truth of Brahman’s Oneness in all with your own eyes, you will no longer fall into the delusion of seeing reality as partitioned, disorganized, incomplete, and dystopic. Rather, you will see Brahman’s unifying Oneness in your Self and all God’s creation, shredding your delusions about creation and the ‘*Truth of Reality*’ (previous verse).

In this and the following verse, Krishna assures Arjuna that true knowledge dispels delusion. With this knowledge, one perceives the unity of all beings in the Self and attains Supreme Peace. Even the most sinful of sinners can transcend all sins through the boat of knowledge alone, experiencing a profound transformation and harmonizing with the eternal present.

4.36. *Even if you were the most sinful of all sinners, you will cross over all sinfulness by the boat of knowledge alone.*

“The sun is setting. I feel this river flowing through me — its past, its ancient soil, the changing climate. The hills gently girdle it about. Its course is fixed,” Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer*.

‘Sinful’ actions retard evolution for all (2.47). Bad *juju*.

By ‘boat of knowledge alone’ means that we require only knowledge to ‘cross over all sinfulness’ — neither penance, pardon, forgiveness, jail time, self-flagellation, nor sympathy useful.

The past is part of the present. Knowledge alone is enough to overcome sinfulness. Feelings guide our sense of right and wrong; past actions make sense when seen through the lens of familiarity in the present. By living in the present and feeling familiar with all and knowing all, we find a sense of belonging that obviates the need for penance, forgiveness, or self-flagellation for past sins. Krishna asserts that by embracing knowledge, we cross over all sinfulness and find delight in the permanent Truth of Reality.

Krishna reassures Arjuna that even the most sinful can overcome all sins by the boat of knowledge alone. Knowledge, defined as seeing Brahman's Oneness, serves as a powerful means to dissolve all actions and their consequences, akin to fire reducing wood to ashes. This transformative knowledge, Krishna declares, is unmatched in purifying the mind and leading to Supreme Peace (following verse).

4.37. *As fire reduces wood to ashes, the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes.*

Seeing Brahman's Oneness in all actions, we feel familiar with all actions. From eternal Brahman arises all actions. Knowing all actions on the level of familiarity with Brahman's Oneness dispenses with notions of our involvement and of cause-and-effect. It is as if the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes, stripping away their material nature and leaving us with the spirit of action's nature to engender evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing.

In this and the following verse, Krishna asserts the unparalleled purifying power of knowledge. The analogy of fire reducing wood to ashes symbolizes how the fire of knowledge annihilates the consequences of all actions. He

emphasizes that knowledge is the ultimate purifier, dissolving past actions and granting a vision free from the shackles of cause-and-effect.

4.38. There is no purifier equal to knowledge. In this world, he who is perfected in Yoga, in time, finds that knowledge in the Self.

Knowledge crosses over all sinful actions and reduces actions to the singular pursuit of higher wellbeing (previous two verses). Hence, knowledge has no peer in purifying action. The same too with higher Self: higher Absolute Self purifies active lower self. Knowing the Self, spontaneous right actions of lower self pursue evolution to higher wellbeing and cross over all sinful wrong actions that retard wellbeing.

'*Perfected in Yoga*,' perfected in union, perfected in vision. Seeing — actually having the visual experience of seeing Oneness backlighting all — the Oneness of Brahman unifies all with Absolute Self. We achieve unqualified certainty: "I am that; thou art that; all this is that" reveals itself. In feeling familiar with all, it all makes sense (4.36).

Krishna declares that knowledge is the supreme purifier, dissolving the consequences of actions. He emphasizes that one perfected in Yoga, unified in vision, eventually discovers this knowledge within the Self. He asserts that possessing faith leads to knowledge, and devoted pursuit of knowledge, combined with subdued senses, swiftly culminates in Supreme Peace (following verse).

Clouds of ignorance begone:

Overview:

The *Bhagavad Gita* stands as a beacon of wisdom guiding action, offering a clear path through the murkiness of human ignorance. "Clouds of ignorance begone" presents a clarion call to dispel the darkness that veils our understanding and keeps us bound in the cycle of ignorance and suffering. This section of the Gita underscores the transformative power of knowledge, likening it to the rising sun that dispels the darkness, revealing the omnipresence of Brahman, the ultimate reality of permanence underlying impermanence: see Brahman's Oneness backlighting all.

Krishna's teachings to Arjuna testify to the profound impact of divine knowledge. He emphasizes that even the gravest sinner can cross over all sinfulness by the "boat of knowledge" alone. This metaphorical boat signifies

the sufficiency of knowledge to cross the turbulent waters of life's moral and existential challenges. By experiencing this knowledge, one transcends the need for penance, forgiveness, or any form of external absolution. Knowledge, in its purest form, is depicted as the ultimate purifier, capable of reducing the consequences of all actions to ashes, much like fire consumes wood.

The essence of this transformative knowledge lies in seeing Brahman's Oneness. When one sees the unifying presence of Brahman in every thing, a profound sense of familiarity, belonging and knowing all emerges. This realization dispels the illusion of cause and effect, placing the individual in the eternal present, where the higher Self reigns supreme. It is this clear vision, achieved through the perfection of Yoga, that leads to the ultimate liberation and peace.

Krishna's assurance that knowledge is the supreme purifier is both comforting and empowering. He urges Arjuna to devote himself to the pursuit of this knowledge through the practice of Karma Yoga — we sacrifice our own desires by serving others' desires — emphasizing that faith and subdued senses are essential in this quest. Faith, as Krishna presents it, is the unwavering certainty of Brahman's Oneness — achieved by actually seeing this Oneness — fostering a harmonious interplay of heart and mind that leads to inner peace.

However, Krishna also warns of the perils of ignorance. He describes those who lack knowledge as wandering in the delusion of bondage to action, unable to find happiness. Doubt, born of ignorance in failing to see Oneness underlying all, is the primary obstacle to enlightenment. Therefore, Krishna advises the eradication of doubt through the pursuit of knowledge by the practice of Karma Yoga, which involves selfless service to others. By serving others, one cuts away the doubts that cloud the heart and mind.

The culmination of this journey of knowledge to higher knowledge is the realization of the Self. Krishna explains that by rooting the intellect in Brahman and cleansing oneself of impurities through knowledge, one transcends the cycle of rebirth. This state of enlightenment is marked by an unwavering visual experience of Brahman's Oneness, leading to a life of equanimity and profound contentment.

In conclusion, "Clouds of ignorance begone" is a powerful exhortation to seek knowledge as the path to liberation. Krishna's teachings illuminate the way, offering practical guidance and profound insights into the nature of reality and Self. By embracing divine knowledge, we dispel the clouds of

ignorance, achieve inner peace and realize the eternal truth of Brahman's Oneness. This section of the Gita is a timeless reminder of the transformative power of knowledge and the boundless potential it holds for human wellbeing.

4.39. He who is possessed of faith gains knowledge. Devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, senses subdued, having attained knowledge, swiftly he attains Supreme Peace.

One '*who is possessed of faith*' has achieved unqualified certainty of Oneness pervading all creation (previous verse). Out of faith, expansion of heart and intimate feeling of familiarity with all. Out of feeling familiar with all, one attains knowledge of all (4.33).

Devoted to duty, '*devoted to the pursuit of knowledge*.' '*All actions, without exception, increase knowledge*,' sacrificial actions more so (4.33). By devotion to duty, we devote ourselves to sacrificial actions (3.08). Actively pursuing knowledge through sacrificial actions synchronizes heart (feelings) and mind (logic), subduing distractions born of the senses with a singular purpose of heart and mind.

'*Knowledge*' of all leaves no wiggle room for doubt (of heart) and delusion (of mind). Liberated from doubt of eternal contentment and delusion about unity of life, heart and mind harmoniously work together (also 4.21). Heart and mind simultaneously pulling oars of feelings and logic, '*Swiftly he attains Supreme Peace*' (in Brahman Consciousness, 5.29).

In this and the following verse, Krishna emphasizes the transformative power of knowledge and devotion in dispelling doubt. Those possessed of faith and devoted to knowledge swiftly attain Supreme Peace, while a doubting nature leads to loss and unhappiness. These verses underscore the pivotal role of faith and knowledge in spiritual progress, urging the dispelling of doubt through devotion and pursuit of knowledge.

4.40. The man without knowledge, who lacks faith and of a doubting nature, is lost. Neither this world nor that beyond nor happiness is for him who doubts.

From a '*doubting nature*,' lack of faith; from lack of faith, lack of knowledge (previous two verses). But doubt is not the problem. Instead, the problem is failing to see Oneness of Brahman in all creation (4.18 - 4.23).

Therefore, dispel doubt by devotion to duty and the pursuit of knowledge; as knowledge dawns, vision clarifies (previous two verses). See your way forward. See Oneness in all. Gain unqualified faith in the unified nature of reality (4.34) and leave no room for doubt.

'The man without knowledge, who lacks faith and of a doubting nature, is lost.' Without starting the practice of Karma Yoga, one naturally remains uncertain about the power of knowledge to dispel their *'doubting nature.'* Lacking the transformative experiences of sacrificing desire and of faith in the brighter future service to others renders, he remains blissfully stuck in the ignorance of attachment. In bondage to action, he is a willing servant to the dark forces of adharma (4.07). In disharmony with Nature, *'Neither this world nor that beyond nor happiness is for him who doubts.'* See — actually see — Oneness in all and cast away doubt.

In this and the following verse, Krishna underscores the pivotal role of knowledge in liberation. Actions don't bind one who, through Karma Yoga, renounces attachment to actions and realizes the Self. Doubt dissipates with knowledge, leading to the perfection of Yoga. Such a person, liberated from the bondage to action, effortlessly attains Supreme Peace.

4.41. Him actions do not bind who has renounced action through the practice of Yoga, whose doubt is cut away by knowledge, who is possessed of the Self.

Through the practice of Karma Yoga, we renounce action (2.45). We see ourselves separate from action (Ch 2 and 3). Engaging in actions while separate from actions, in time we see *'nonaction in action and action in nonaction'* (4.18). We see unifying Brahman's Oneness permeating all. We see Oneness in all; we gain familiarity with all (*'nectar,'* 4.31); we know all (4.33). This knowledge of all cuts away doubt about the unified nature of reality (previous three verses).

'Possessed of the Self' in unified Oneness with all creation there is nothing to gain from action; in Oneness with all, we have intimate familiarity with whatever actions might gain. Nothing more can be gained by possessing the ephemeral reality of fruit! We have reached the goal of practicing Karma Yoga set by Krishna in verse 2.39. We have *'cast away the bondage of karma,'* bondage to the cycle of impression-desire-action. *'Him actions do not bind.'*

In this and the following verse, Krishna advocates renouncing action through Karma Yoga, emphasizing that actions do not bind one who walks this path. He urges Arjuna to wield the sword of knowledge, cutting away doubt born of ignorance. Krishna calls Arjuna to resort to Yoga — Karma Yoga — highlighting the transformative power of action and the importance of standing up in the pursuit of knowledge.

4.42. Swing the sword of knowledge and cut away this doubt born of ignorance which abides in the heart. Resort to Yoga! Stand up, Arjuna!

“What matters most is how well you walk through the fire,” Charles Bukowski. ‘*Swing the sword of knowledge*’ means to practice Karma Yoga, the Yoga of action. Krishna invokes the image of the warrior in action. He wants Arjuna’s mind’s eye to see. Krishna does not, in fact, instruct Arjuna to swing a sword but to ‘*Stand up.*’ In so doing, Arjuna practices Karma Yoga by swinging the sword of knowledge born of action in serving others’ desires.

‘*Cut away this doubt born of ignorance which abides in the heart.*’ The heart listens to the language of feeling. Ignorance sings the sweet and comfy song of inertia. On the other hand, seeing Oneness in all, we gain the intimate feeling of familiarity with all. Out of feeling familiar with all, we gain knowledge of eternal contentment and unifying Oneness which underlie all action, leaving no room for doubt born of inertia.

‘*Swing the sword.*’ ‘*Resort to Yoga* [of action]. *Stand up!*’ Cross over all sinfulness by the boat of knowledge alone (4.37). Purified by knowledge, dissolve actions and their consequences (4.38). Swiftly attain Supreme Peace (4.39). Dispel doubt by the pursuit of knowledge (4.40). In union with all, free yourself from the bondage to action (previous verse). Act and free yourself from sinfulness, consequence of action, dithering, doubt, and bondage to action.

All Arjuna — and you — must do is ‘*Stand up!*’ The practice of Karma Yoga — swinging the sword of knowledge — is just that simple. Do your duty, act in service to others in even the simplest ways. Gain knowledge of all. ‘*Stand up.*’ It is just that simple.

Cosmic Consciousness:

Summary:

Understanding *plus* experience *equals* knowledge.

Understanding: By serving others' desires, we break bondage to action. Seeking happiness through desire, we become attached to a desirous object's attractive qualities. Pursuing ephemeral happiness outside ourselves, we skip from one attraction to the next. Failing to find the lasting happiness sought, we become bound to our actions to find it. The problem is, happiness lies within. Looking for happiness "out there," we spin our wheels and get nowhere fast. However, when we serve others' desires, we innocently renounce our own desires. Desires renounced, the mind breaks free from the bondage to action desires seed. Unshackled from desire and from searching for happiness outside ourselves, the mind spontaneously turns within to happiness' true source. Operating from refined levels of awareness, the mind steadies. Attachments born of appetite, fear and anger depart. From repeated acts of selfless service to others, we withdraw from attachments and break bondage to action. Liberated from bondage and established in inner contentment of our higher nature, desires enter the mind as waters enter the full and undisturbed seas. Longings subdued, we live independent of the sense of 'I' and 'mine' and find lasting happiness at its unbounded source, the Self.

Experience: Act. Do your duty: sacrifice desire by selflessly serving the desires of those you honor and love. Sacrificing desire unites us with Brahman, the highest reality in the universe. Brahman is the cause of action that does not act, the One binding unity of all diversity, the essence of the universe, the Golden Glue of it all. What's more, Brahman is eternally established in sacrifice of desire. In league with Brahman in sacrificing our desire for others' desires and liberated from the delusion of having to control action, witness desire and action run of their own accord. Go with the flow. Avert the sway of attraction, aversion and bondage to action. Innocently shake off sinful acts retarding evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing. Feel Oneness of Brahman well up through senses, mind and intellect. Experience Brahman naturally permeate into sacrifice of desire and the sacrificial actions desire seeds, strengthening the synergy uniting understanding and experience. Feel fulfillment dawn. In selflessly acting for the world's welfare, slay the enemy in the form of desire. World peace through inner peace.

Knowledge: Krishna's teaching on sacrificing desire gets lost and remains hidden from view because of its obviousness and simplicity. The problem is, His teaching is as plain as the nose on your face. To varying degrees, sacrificing desire is something we do every day. But without intellectual understanding it, the value of sacrificing desire loses itself in the daily shuffle and scuffle of action. And without direct experience of liberation from action, understanding goes unverified and synergy between understanding and experience wanes. Without unity of understanding and experience, right actions supporting evolution fall into decay and wrong actions opposing evolution flourish. Performing selfless right actions through the sacrifice of desire, we experience liberation. In time, liberation from action deepens. Understanding and experience unite. We see nonaction in action and action in nonaction. That is, we see Oneness of Brahman in everything. Seeing Oneness in all, we become familiar with all. We know all. This is supreme knowledge in Cosmic Consciousness, where Nature's wisdom guides action. Fulfilled within and independent of attachment and bondage, we engage in action on the surface of the mind, while deep within, we do not act at all. In naturally abandoning the motive for possessions and possessive acts, we incur no sin. Transcending dualities of success and failure, we achieve balance in daily activities. Seeing Oneness of Brahman in all and witnessing action run of its own accord, we rise above the delusion of thinking we control action. Doubts fall away. Having gained faith in His teachings through understanding and experience, we live the knowledge of Cosmic Consciousness and evolve towards even higher states of awareness.

Conclusion:

What is Cosmic Consciousness? In Cosmic Consciousness, the "nonchanging" dominates the "changing." Simultaneously occurring changing and nonchanging aspects of our nature compose the human experience. In waking state consciousness, we identify with the ever-changing and get caught up in it. Even so, at times and to varying degrees, we experience our quiet nonchanging nature, aka the *dweller in the body*, underlying our engagement in overriding outer activities. In Cosmic Consciousness, it's the other way around: our inner nonchanging nature dominates our outer ever-changing nature. On the surface of the mind, we witness desires and actions run of their own accord, getting things done. Deep within, we remain quiet and content through thick and thin, success and failure, and all dualities of life. This experience of quiet inner awareness during dynamic outer activities is akin to having a "good day," wherein all falls into place and we think, 'Life is as it should be.'

How do we achieve Cosmic Consciousness? Serve others' desires, that is, practice the yoga of action, Karma Yoga. Serving others' desires, we transcend our selfish desires, the actions they seed and our ever-changing nature caught up in the world of action. Actions performed out of inner contentment of our nonchanging nature feel natural and purposeful and we enjoy performing them. Optimism rules. Possibilities pop out of the woodwork. Actions feel spot on. Harmony between our nonchanging inner nature and outer activity strengthens the pervasive feeling of inner contentment. In the groove of duty, we increasingly feel comfortable performing actions from our nonchanging nature. We come to identify with inner contentment. The fog lifts and the *dweller in the body* witnesses the ever-changing as separate from its nonchanging nature.

What's missing from this picture? God. Witnessing selfless desires unfold and feeling separated from the field of action can be strangely isolating and off-putting at first. But over time, having broken free from attractions and aversions, we become established in contentment and attain inner peace. Sorrows dissipate. Steady thought prevails. Out of inner peace, underlying happiness dawns of its own regenerative accord. With the even vision of pervasive happiness, we see God abiding in all things. Seeing God everywhere, He is not lost to us: His magnetic charisma saturates our field of vision. The following three chapters dip their toes into the purifying waters that unite the *dweller in the body* with Him, and where, in time, we come to know Him fully.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 5: Brahman Consciousness — Calmness Separates Self from Action

To act in accord with Brahman is to see Brahman's Oneness in action while simultaneously engaged in that action.

Commentary on Ch 5 verses 1 – 29:

Taking the path of action:

Overview:

In the vast expanse of the *Bhagavad Gita*, certain teachings shine with luminescent clarity, echoing the eternal struggle between renunciation and selfless action as means to liberation from action. Krishna's words, as powerful as they are profound, guide us toward an understanding of life that transcends mere existence and touches the divine essence within each of us. These teachings do not simply advise; they command a deeper, more thoughtful engagement with the world, urging us to find the balance between spiritual renunciation and dynamic action.

Consider the pivotal query about which path is superior: overt renunciation of action or the active path of selfless service. In this simple question lies the crux of human endeavor and spiritual quest. Torn between duty and the yearning for spiritual peace, each of us stands at a crossroads, seeking the best way to live a life of meaning and fulfillment.

Krishna's response is both direct and profound. He acknowledges the value of both paths but emphasizes the superiority of action over overt renunciation. This teaching is a clarion call for those who might find solace in the quiet withdrawal from the world's chaos, suggesting instead that true peace and fulfillment come from engaging with the world through selfless action, the practice of Karma Yoga.

Imagine, if you will, a river. It flows tirelessly, nourishing life along its banks, creating a symphony of movement and sound. The river, in its ceaseless flow, embodies the essence of Karma Yoga — the Yoga of action. It does not seek rewards; it simply fulfills its purpose, serving all who depend on its waters. Krishna's guidance suggests that we too should be like the river, constantly in motion, performing our duties and serving others without attachment to the fruits of our actions.

Krishna's teaching also highlights the seeker who neither hates nor desires. This seeker of truth, having conquered his inner conflicts, stands as a beacon of balance and equanimity. He is not swayed by the dualities of life — success and failure, joy and sorrow — but remains steadfast in his commitment to selfless service. This state of mind is the highest form of renunciation. It is not the renunciation of action but the natural renunciation of egoism that claims ownership of action and its outcomes. Selflessly serve others' desires and innocently renounce egoism.

In a society that often glorifies the grand gestures and the loud proclamations of success, Krishna's words remind us of the quiet power of humility and the profound impact of actions performed in silence and with love. It is through these actions that we connect with the divine, that we find our higher Self, and that we ultimately transcend the mundane to touch the eternal. Such is the nature of Karma Yoga: serving others' desires and therefore, naturally sacrificing our own.

These teachings, therefore, do not merely offer a philosophical perspective; they provide a practical guide for living a life of purpose and fulfillment: practice Karma Yoga. They encourage us to embrace our responsibilities, to engage with the world, and to do so with a heart full of love and a mind free from the shackles of egoism and desire. In doing so, we do not renounce life; we embrace it in its fullest, most beautiful form.

Krishna's teachings are a testament to the transformative power of action. They challenge us to rise above our petty concerns and to see our lives as part of a grand, divine tapestry, where every thread of action, however small, contributes to the greater good. In this way, we do not just live; we ascend, each act of selfless service lifting us higher, closer to the divine, until we too become part of the eternal flow of life, like the river that nourishes all in its path.

5.01. Arjuna: *On the one hand, You praise renunciation of action and on the other, You praise the Yoga of action. Tell me definitively, which one is better of the two?*

In this context, '*renunciation of action*' means removing oneself from worldly life by overtly renouncing desire and following the recluse path of contemplation (3.03 – 3.05).

'*Yoga of action*' means the practice of Karma Yoga, where we spontaneously perform right actions supporting evolution. We innocently renounce desire

and the action it seeds by following the path of action, the householder's path of serving others' desires (3.03 – 3.05; 3.08).

Arjuna has reached to point where he must know. Before proceeding in Krishna's teachings, Arjuna asks, '*Tell me definitively* [Arjuna has asked for direction before but now gets specific], *which is better of the two?*'

Arjuna questions Krishna about the apparent contradiction between overt renunciation and the Yoga of action. In the following verse, Krishna responds, asserting that both lead to ultimate happiness, but the Yoga of action is superior. This path is more direct, efficient, and suitable for individuals like Arjuna, a man of action.

5.02. Lord Krishna: *Both the renunciation of action and the Yoga of action lead to the highest happiness. Of the two, however, the Yoga of action is superior to renunciation of action.*

Here, '*superior*' means most direct and efficient to achieve the '*highest happiness*' and best to lift Arjuna — a man of action — out of his muck and muddle of conflicting heart and mind on the battlefield of life.

A man of action (Vedavyasa) wrote the *Bhagavad Gita* about a man of action (Arjuna) for people of action. People of action are the custodians of the knowledge of action (4.33). But the knowledge of action has been lost: '*knowledge of this Yoga has been lost*' (4.02). Confused about the effectiveness of either overt renunciation of action or taking action, Arjuna can only turn to Krishna for guidance.

In response to '*Tell me definitively*,' (previous verse) Krishna responds, '*The Yoga of action is superior to renunciation of action.*' In the Yoga of action — the practice of Karma Yoga (2.45, 3.08) — we innocently renounce desire and action when we serve others' desires. Instantly we achieve inner '*happiness*,' setting our feet firmly on the path to '*highest happiness*' and peace in Brahman Consciousness (this chapter).

In time, the practice of Karma Yoga becomes spontaneous and natural.

Krishna declares that both renunciation of action and the Yoga of action lead to the highest happiness, but the latter is superior. He describes a true renunciant, one who remains indifferent to dualities, easily released from bondage, and illuminated by the bright light of '*highest happiness*,' establishing the superiority of the Yoga of action (following verse).

5.03. *Know him to be the man of renunciation who neither hates nor covets, who remains eternally indifferent to the pairs of opposites, Arjuna. He is easily released from bondage.*

In this context, '*renunciation*' is the state of higher Self separate from action, the state of established intellect in Cosmic Consciousness, where, separate from action, we witness desire and action go of their own accord (Ch 2 – 4). The bright light of '*highest happiness*' (previous verse) shines through the fog of ignorance, yielding coolness to success and failure, pleasure and pain, progress and reversal and other dualities in the relative field of life. Lesser emotions of hate and covetousness pale in the dawning light of '*highest happiness*' and fail to incentivize desire and action for transitory goals and the binding cycle of impression-desire-action. '*He is easily released from bondage* [to action].'

Here, Krishna describes the renunciant as one who remains indifferent to dualities, easily liberated from bondage. Transitioning to the following verse, He asserts that both Samkhya and the Yoga of action, seemingly different, lead to the same goal of highest happiness. The Oneness of Brahman pervades both paths, emphasizing their essential unity.

Quickly attain Brahman:

Overview:

In the tapestry of the *Bhagavad Gita*, one finds myriad threads weaving together the themes of duty, devotion and the pursuit of knowledge. Among these, the concept of swiftly attaining Brahman — once having achieved Cosmic Consciousness — stands out as a beacon for seekers. This journey, illuminated by Krishna's teachings, reveals the harmonious blend of action and natural renunciation of desire realized by serving others' desires, guiding individuals towards ultimate liberation.

The essence of this pursuit lies in the understanding that both the path of contemplation and the path of action lead to the same exalted destination. Krishna elucidates that whether one follows the reclusive path of Samkhya, marked by introspective contemplation, or the dynamic path of Karma Yoga, characterized by selfless service, the fruit remains the same: attainment of the highest happiness, rooted in the realization of Brahman's universal Oneness.

The Unity of Paths: Krishna's discourse emphasizes the non-duality of these paths. It is a common misconception, He argues, to see Samkhya and

Karma Yoga as disparate. In truth, both are interwoven strands of the same spiritual journey. The wise perceive this unity, recognizing that disciplining the mind through study and contemplation, and the purity of actions both cultivate the ground for spiritual growth. It is through the practice of Karma Yoga that one most readily purifies the mind, naturally fostering a sense of renunciation that is otherwise challenging to achieve in isolation.

The Practice of Karma Yoga: Karma Yoga, the yoga of action, stands as a testament to the profound truth that through selfless service — serving others' desires — one transcends the bindings of selfish desire. This path is not merely about performing actions but doing so with a sense of devotion and detachment. When one serves others' desires, one's own desires are spontaneously renounced. This practice purifies the mind and fosters a vision of Brahman's Oneness in all things. It is this vision of Oneness that elevates the practitioner beyond the realm of ordinary action, enabling them to perceive the divine in every aspect of life.

The Role of Renunciation: Renunciation is not the practice of Karma Yoga but an outcome of the practice. Renunciation, in this context, is not about withdrawal from life but about a deeper engagement with it. The true renunciant, as described by Krishna, is one who naturally remains indifferent to the dualities of pleasure and pain, success and failure — by selflessly serving others' desires and naturally renouncing their own, through Karma Yoga. This equanimity is born from a deep-seated realization of the Self, which transcends the transient nature of worldly experiences. Such an individual, established in the Self, views all actions as expressions of the divine, thus remaining untouched by the fruits of these actions.

Attaining Brahman: The swift attainment of Brahman is characterized by a state of inner calm and unwavering peace. This state is achieved through the practice of Karma Yoga, where the mind, senses and intellect are harmonized with the higher Self. As one becomes more established in this practice, egoism diminishes and the universal Self shines forth, leading to a spontaneous renunciation of all selfish actions. This renunciation is not an effort but a natural state of being that arises from the profound realization of Brahman's omnipresence.

The Fruits of Discipline: For the disciplined practitioner, the journey culminates in the realization of eternal freedom within Brahman. This freedom is marked by inner contentment that is untouched by external circumstances. Such an individual, illuminated by the light of Brahman's Oneness, finds joy in the welfare of all beings, their actions guided by a

higher purpose. In this state, one experiences the true essence of Brahman Consciousness, where the distinction between the doer and the deed dissolves, revealing the underlying unity of all existence — and attainment of lasting inner peace and calmness.

In conclusion, the path to quickly attaining Brahman, as laid out by Krishna, is one of naturally integrating action with renunciation of it through the practice of Karma Yoga. It is a journey of purifying the mind through selfless service and cultivating a vision of Oneness that transcends — backlights — the ephemeral nature of the material world. This journey promises the highest reward: the eternal peace and freedom that come from realizing the Self as one with Brahman.

5.04. The naïve, not the wise, declare Samkhya and the Yoga of action differ. Practiced correctly, either finds the fruit of both.

5.05. Followers of Samkhya and the Yoga of action reach the same goal. Samkhya and the Yoga of action are one on the level of outcome. He who sees this, truly sees.

'Samkhya' is a philosophy that brings the knowledge of separation between higher Self and action. In this verse, 'Samkhya' refers to study and contemplation along the recluse path of overt renunciation from action.

The 'Yoga of action' is Karma Yoga and is practiced by those who take the path of action. In Karma Yoga, our actions serve others and in this way, we spontaneously renounce our own actions (2.45).

Regardless of the path taken, reclusive or active, '*either finds the fruit of both,*' which is the '*highest happiness*' (5.02).

Samkhya and the Yoga of action reach renunciation of action through action alone, be it mental contemplation or physical action to serve others' desires, respectively.

'*He who sees*' the Oneness of Brahman in all reality (Oneness, 4.18; knowledge or "*sees,*" 4.33) — from galaxies to quarks; from desires to thoughts to philosophies; in all diverse action — sees that '*Samkhya and the Yoga of action are one.*' '*He who sees this* [underlying reality of Oneness of Brahman pervading Samkhya and Karma Yoga], *truly sees*' reality.

In summary, Samkhya and Karma Yoga are '*one*' in at least five ways: 1) both sacrifice desire, either overtly or spontaneously; 2) both are paths of liberation; 3) they reach the same goal of '*highest happiness,*' 4) both require

action, mental or physical, 5) having reached the goal of Brahman by either path, the practitioner “sees” each in the same light of Oneness.

Krishna asserts that followers of Samkhya and the Yoga of action reach the same goal, emphasizing their essential oneness in renouncing desire through different paths. Transitioning to the following verse, Krishna states that renunciation is challenging without the Yoga of action, highlighting the importance of active, spontaneous practice in attaining Brahman.

5.06. Renunciation is difficult to attain without the Yoga of action, Arjuna. The wise devoted to the Yoga of action quickly attains Brahman.

In this context, ‘*renunciation*’ means the natural detachment of higher Self from action. The all-pervasive Oneness we see is “out there” in the relative. This realized ‘*renunciation*’ from action is true meaning of austerity: quiet higher Self austere from involved lower self.

The ‘*Yoga of action*’ is Karma Yoga and is practiced by those who take the path of action. In Karma Yoga, we serve others’ desires and so, spontaneously renounce our selfish desires and the actions they seed.

‘Devoted’ means to practice spontaneously as a course of action in a daily life of action. ‘*The wise devoted to the Yoga of action*’ quickly see Oneness of Brahman in all reality because the practice itself is the direct means of gaining renunciation (4.33, 5.02). That is, serve others’ desires and naturally renounce your own. This act of service purifies the mind to where we can actually “see” Oneness of Brahman in all (following verse).

Krishna asserts that renunciation is challenging without the Yoga of action. The wise, devoted to Karma Yoga, swiftly attain Brahman. In the following verse, those devoted to the Yoga of action, purified and self-mastered, see the Self in all beings. They transcend all actions, achieving a state beyond involvement in worldly endeavors.

5.07. Devoted to the Yoga of action, purified, having mastered the self, whose senses are conquered, whose self has become the Self of all beings, he is beyond all action.

‘Devoted [spontaneously practicing] to the Yoga of action’ we see Oneness of Brahman in all creation (4.18; previous verse).

‘Purified’: To purify is to rid the mind of foreign elements that block seeing Brahman’s Oneness in all. Purified through the action of Karma Yoga, where,

in time, spontaneous renunciation rids the mind of elements opposing it, we see Oneness of Brahman in all; we see only the elemental good and increase in all. [See also verse 4.10, *'Purified by the austerity of knowledge.'*]

'Mastered the self': The lower self is individuality. Seeing Oneness of Brahman in all, lower self is exposed to universality of Oneness. Universality gains control over individuality. [See also verse 2.61, "the lower self — ego, intellect and mind — sits *'united in the Self'* and takes on its Absolute unbounded nature." Also in 2.64, "The lower self infused with fulfilled higher Self."]

'Whose senses are conquered.' The senses detect unique aspects of their objects which distinguish them one from another: a duck is not a quark. In seeing Oneness of Brahman in all, unique aspects remain, but within each — backlighting each, if you will — is the underlying Oneness of Brahman. Seeing Oneness among unique objects overrides their uniqueness and the senses that detect them. Through the sense of sight, we experience Oneness. [See also verse 2.61, *'Having controlled the senses.'*]

'Whose self has become the Self of all beings': the higher Self is unbounded universality, which is found in all reality, including *'beings.'* The lower self in union with unbounded universal higher Self takes on the qualities of Oneness higher Self identifies with in *'all beings.'* In this way, lower self becomes the Self of all beings. [See also verse 4.35, *'by that knowledge you will see all beings in your Self and also in Me.'*]

'He is beyond all action' whose Self identifies with Oneness of Brahman and like Brahman, is the cause of action but not involved in action at all (7.04; 7.05 – 7.12). Enjoying the fullness of Brahman in everything, we feel no need to act to achieve happiness in objects of the senses.

Here, Krishna describes the devoted practitioner of the Yoga of action as one who, purified and Self-mastered, transcends all actions and senses, existing beyond the realm of action. Connecting to the following verse, Krishna continues, stating that those who perceive the truth of Brahman maintain nonaction even while engaged in various activities.

Act in accord with Brahman:

Overview:

Having achieved Cosmic Consciousness, to act in accord with Brahman is to naturally see Brahman's Oneness in everything while engaged in action. In doing so, we move beyond the illusion of bondage and participate in the

divine play of the universe with a sense of desires and actions running of their own accord.

When we act in accord with Brahman, we perform actions without attachment to their outcomes, naturally. This detachment does not imply feigned indifference or apathy; rather, it signifies a deep awareness that the higher Self is distinct from the transient phenomena of the material world. This perspective transforms how we engage with life's challenges and opportunities. By understanding and actually experiencing that our essential nature — the Self — is beyond the physical and mental planes, we approach our duties with a sense of peace and equanimity.

This natural approach to action achieved by serving others' desires fosters inner calm and clarity. The mind, no longer agitated by the incessant pursuit of external rewards — or the fear of failure — settles into a state of serene attention. This clarity enables one to perform duties with precision and care, enhancing the quality of both the actions and their results. The *Gita* teaches that such a state of balanced action is Yoga, the union of individual effort with the universal will, self within Self.

Ultimately, to act in accord with Brahman is to live in a state of awareness and harmony with the eternal Truth: we do not act at all. In every moment and every action lies an expression of the same underlying reality. This awareness transforms our experience of life, bringing us into alignment with the natural order and leading us towards true liberation and fulfillment.

5.08. Seeing the Truth of Brahman, he maintains 'I do not act at all,' whether seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, walking, sleeping, breathing.

5.09. Talking, moving, letting go, grasping, opening and closing the eyes, he believes the senses abide in objects of the senses.

These two verses address passively and actively experiencing separation of Self from action, that is, experiencing natural renunciation from action.

It's an experience. Separation of Self from action initially retains some residue of attachment. Upon gaining Cosmic Consciousness we feel unfamiliar with this experience of higher Self separate from action because the observation itself lies in the field of action. And action overshadows the Divine nature of separation.

It's an experience. Seeing Oneness of Brahman in all enhances separation between Self and action and clinches the feeling of familiarity with it. The Self “sees” its independence from action. The experience component of

knowledge catches up with the understanding component. The quiet knowledge '*I do not act at all*' reveals itself (5.08).

It's an experience. In this state of Brahman-level nonattachment, the senses and organs of actions act of their own accord. We realize Divine separation and live the axiomatic truth that '*the senses abide in the objects of the senses*.' All that "out there" — whether passively (5.08) or actively (5.09) engaged — is not of our doing whatsoever. On the most refined level, it is all One and the same, including the senses.

Krishna describes the Yogi who, while engaged in various actions, maintains the awareness of the non-doer. He emphasizes that acting in accord with Brahman, free from attachments, leads to purity and untainted actions, like a lotus leaf untouched by water (following verse).

5.10. Acting in accord with Brahman, having abandoned attachments, his acts are untainted by sin as a lotus leaf by water.

Acting in accord with Brahman means acting without acting at all.

Though a lotus flower floats in water, the essential nature of its watery environment rolls off its leaves without wetting them.

Acting in accord with fullness of seeing Brahman in all, that is, not acting at all, we abandon attachments to senses, their objects and actions. Even though immersed in a world of sinful incentives to perform wrong action, incentives "out there" fail to impress the mind and lead to sinful acts for one who does not act all.

Infuse Brahman for Purification:

Overview:

Krishna teaches that by seeing Brahman's Oneness — the ultimate reality that pervades all existence — in every aspect of life, we achieve a state of purity and inner peace. This perspective transforms everyday actions into sacred offerings, bridging the gap between the material and the spiritual.

These verses show that by seeing Brahman's omnipresence while engaged in action leads to purification. This purification is not merely physical or ritualistic but is a profound inner transformation. It involves purification of the mind and heart, where one becomes free from selfish desires and attachments. By seeing Brahman in all, egoism diminishes, leading to a harmonious and unified life.

Dynamic action, in this context, means engaging in the world with full awareness and dedication. When we perform actions with a sense of duty and devotion, while seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, actions become a means of purification and spiritual growth. This approach to life fosters a balanced mind, where success and failure are experienced with equanimity.

Seeing Brahman's Oneness in all leads to a state of even-mindedness, where one remains steady amidst the dualities of life. It cultivates a sense of inner peace and contentment, as the individual sees the divine order in all actions. This visual experience of seeing Oneness further encourages selfless service — the practice of Karma Yoga — where actions are performed for the greater good, contributing to the wellbeing of all.

Ultimately, purification achieved through this dynamic engagement is marked by inner peace, clarity of mind and a profound sense of unity with all creation. It is the realization that every action, when performed by naturally seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, is a step towards complete spiritual liberation and enlightenment.

5.11. With the body, mind and intellect and even by the senses alone, Yogis perform action for self-purification, having abandoned attachment.

Yogis live separately from action (5.08 – 5.10). Actions remain on the level of body, mind and intellect. Since '*the senses are conquered*' by Brahman (5.07), they corporally function with fruits of action independently of higher Self.

Activity is essential for '*self-purification*.' Engaging lower self in activity while seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, bathes lower self in the purity of Brahman, infusing Brahman's Oneness into body, mind and intellect of lower self [*'Mastered the self*,' 5.07]. Infusion purifies lower self, ridding it of harmful elements foreign to seeing Oneness in everything. Purification takes time.

In this and the following verse, Krishna explains that Yogis, disciplined in the Yoga of action, perform actions for self-purification, spontaneously abandoning attachment to their results. By naturally relinquishing the fruits of action, they attain inner peace, while the undisciplined, attached to desires, remain bound to the cycle of action and reaction.

5.12. Disciplined in the Yoga of action, having abandoned the fruit of action, he attains inner peace. The undisciplined ones remain attached to fruits of action, bound to actions spurred by desire.

'Disciplined in the Yoga of action [spontaneously practicing Karma Yoga],' he acts *'for self-purification'* (previous verse). *'Having abandoned fruits of action'* and the vicissitudes of the relative field of life, *'he attains inner peace'* of Absolute higher Self. Feeling familiar with Oneness in all instills calmness and peace of mind. See also verse 2.64, "Having detached from stormy outside influences, *'he attains inner peace.'*" Inner peace is the foundation for experiencing happiness (*'For one lacking peace of mind, can there be happiness?'*, verse 2.66).

'The undisciplined ones' *'act [not] for self-purification.'* In the absence of *'inner peace,'* they seek pleasure in fruits of action. They *'remain attached to fruits of action, bound to actions spurred by desire,'* impure and stuck in the cycle of impression-desire-action (2.39).

Here, Krishna discusses disciplined Yogis who, by abandoning attachment to the fruits of action, attain inner peace. He describes the enlightened dweller in the body who, having renounced all actions with the mind, rests in happiness, detached from the compulsion to act (following verse).

Happiness:

Overview:

Krishna's discourse presents a profound message on happiness and the nature of action. Here, we delve into the essence of happiness, a state that transcends the ephemeral pleasures of the material world and roots itself firmly in the higher Self.

Krishna teaches that true happiness is not a product of external achievements or sensory gratification but emerges from a state of inner peace and Self-mastery. He draws a distinction between the transient pleasures derived from sensory contact and the enduring happiness that arises from inner contentment. This internal happiness is illuminated by seeing the light of Brahman's Oneness, a realization that dissolves the boundaries of individuality and aligns the Self with the infinite.

Krishna shows that the mind's ability to maintain both action and nonaction simultaneously links the actor with the higher Self. This connection allows for actions to be performed without attachment, thereby naturally renouncing the fruits of those actions. The mind, established in the calmness of higher Self finds happiness within. Here, one neither acts nor causes action but resides in a state of serene happiness.

The distinction Krishna makes between the actor and action is pivotal. He clarifies that it is Nature, through its three Gunas, that carries out all actions. The Lord does not create action nor the link between action and its outcomes. This knowledge dispels the delusion of self-authorship of action, fostering a deeper understanding of the Self's true nature, which is untouched by the dualities of the material world.

Krishna further emphasizes that those who have dispelled ignorance — the ignorance that they author action — through divine knowledge see the omnipresence of Brahman. This enlightenment is akin to the rising sun that illuminates everything, revealing the transcendent reality of life. By seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, those who have already achieved Cosmic Consciousness maintain equanimity and experience an even vision that transcends distinctions and dualities.

In essence, these verses guide us to understand that happiness is not found in the transient, external world but within the steadfast realization of the Self's unity with Brahman. By spontaneously renouncing attachment to actions and their outcomes through the practice of Karma Yoga, and by seeing the underlying Oneness in all actions, one attains a state of perpetual contentment and peace. This journey to inner happiness is marked by shedding of ignorance and the open embrace of a higher, all-encompassing consciousness.

5.13. Renouncing all actions with the mind, the dweller in the body rests in happiness, in the city of nine gates, not acting at all, nor causing action.

The '*city of nine gates*' refers to the human body: two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, the mouth, and the organs of excretion and generation.

The mind's capacity to simultaneously maintain action and nonaction links the actor with action and with nonactive higher Self. Having become as familiar with higher Self as with action, the mind sustains nonactive higher Self when engaged in action. In this way, contented higher Self protects the mind from attachment to action. No attachment to action, action '*renounced*.'

'Renouncing all actions with the mind,' that is, '*having abandoned the fruit of action, he attains inner peace*' (previous verse). Having gained '*inner peace*' and happiness (previous verse), '*the dweller in the body* [the individualized nature of the Self] *rests in happiness ... not acting at all, nor causing action,*' separate from action.

Lord Krishna explains the three Gunas' influence on actions. Transitioning to the following verse, He highlights that those who transcend the Gunas of

Nature, established in eternal happiness, recognize the transient nature of material pleasures. By understanding — reinforced by direct experience — the source of true happiness within, they attain lasting contentment, free from the sway of external stimuli.

5.14 The Lord does not create either the authorship of action or the action of people. Neither does the Lord create the link between action and its fruits. Nature carries this out.

The mind links outer and inner (previous verse). Simultaneous activity on the surface of the mind and nonaction of unbounded Self deep within the mind compose life. Out of the unbounded pure consciousness of Self, the Gunas of Nature create action, where experimenter (actor performing 'action'), experienced ('fruit') and experiencing come into being through functioning ego (3.05, 7.04).

This 'link between the action and its fruits' is happiness engendered through peace of mind (5.12). 'The dweller in the body rests in happiness (previous verse).' 'Rests' accurately describes experiencing happiness linking 'action and its fruits,' a refreshing repose of least activity.

5.15. The Lord recognizes neither sinful nor virtuous deeds of anyone. This wisdom of indifference is veiled by ignorance. By ignorance people are deluded.

So, in addition to indifference to authoring action and to linking action and its fruits, the Lord remains aloof to the experience and consequence of action, whether sinful or virtuous. The Gunas of Nature carry out all action. The Lord remains a silent witness to action, experiencing and consequence, regardless of whether actions are either sinful or virtuous.

The ignorant are unaware of this separation between the Lord and action, thinking the Lord grants fruits of action and runs a complex accounting system for leveling reaction, reward and retribution. This delusion further obscures independence from actions — and the trilogy of experience (previous verse).

'Wisdom is veiled by ignorance.' Delusion about the Lord's lack of involvement in action veils Nature's role in desire and action (2.51) and "experiencing" (previous verse). Rid yourself of the notion of Divine intervention, reward and retribution!

Krishna asserts that the Lord remains indifferent to the virtuous or sinful nature of deeds, with this wisdom obscured by ignorance. Transitioning to the following verse, He explains that divine knowledge destroys ignorance, revealing Brahman's omnipresent nature, akin to the sun dispelling darkness, affirming the reality of the transcendent.

The “seer” sees Brahman’s Oneness:

Overview:

The essence of these teachings is the realization of — by seeing — Brahman's Oneness in all aspects of existence. When this divine knowledge eradicates ignorance of seeing the imperishable in the perishable, the true nature of Brahman is unveiled, much like the landscape revealed by the first light of dawn. This knowledge is not just an intellectual exercise but a transformative experience that permeates every part of our being. The enlightened ones, having vanquished the ignorance of thinking they are the doers, see Brahman everywhere, affirming the transcendent reality that underlies all experiences.

They, who anchor their intellect in the transcendent and purify their selves through knowledge, transcend the Gunas of Nature. By cleansing the impurities through the practice of Karma Yoga (5.11 – 5.12), they perceive Brahman illuminating all experiences. Fixing the self in the Self and making the entire basis of experience one with Brahman leads to union with the eternal reality of Brahman.

This journey towards Oneness is both a profound personal transformation and a universal truth. It challenges us to see beyond the apparent separateness of the world and recognize the interconnected fabric of existence. The realization of seeing Brahman's Oneness brings about a sense of peace and liberation, freeing us from the dualities of success and failure, joy and sorrow. In this state of Oneness, our actions become aligned with divine will, and we experience the highest form of happiness and contentment.

Even vision marks the enlightened state described in these verses, where one sees the essence of Brahman in all beings, regardless of their outward appearances. This vision transcends the distinctions imposed by society and recognizes the unifying thread of Brahman's Oneness throughout creation. It leads to a life of equanimity, where we perform actions without attachment to their outcomes.

Ultimately, these teachings invite us to embrace a way of living that is rooted in love, compassion and a deep sense of purpose. By seeing Brahman's essence in all actions and beings, we move towards a state of inner harmony and spiritual fulfillment. This realization not only transforms our individual lives but also contributes to the greater good, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and unity with the cosmos.

5.16. But for those whose ignorance is destroyed by Divine knowledge, Brahman is revealed as the Sun illuminates everything when it rises.

Seeing Brahman's Oneness in all (4.18), we feel familiar with all (4.31), we know all (4.33). In this revelation of seeing Oneness of Brahman permeating all, we realize the omnipresent transcendent. The notion dawns, '*The transcendent is, in fact, real.*'

Knowledge: we see Oneness of Brahman in everything. As the sun rises and destroys the darkness of night, the omnipresent transcendent destroys the veil of ignorance overshadowing Brahman's nature permeating all. Seeing is believing, destroying doubts about the transcendental nature of life which backlights all reality.

The enlightened, their ignorance dispelled, see Brahman's Oneness in everything. This realization, akin to the sun dispelling darkness, confirms the reality of the transcendent. Transitioning to the following verse, those rooted in Brahman, with purified intellect, transcend the cycle of rebirth, reaching the ultimate goal. Thus, by perceiving the omnipresent Brahman and practicing self-discipline, one attains liberation from the material world.

5.17. Those whose intellect is rooted in That, their Selves fixed in That, whose basis is That, cleansed of impurities by knowledge, go to the end of rebirth.

'That' transcendent reality of Brahman permeates all. Cleansed of impurities by knowledge of Oneness (previous verse), we see 'That' which is Brahman backlighting everything.

Via the Gunas of Nature, we create what we see. Ego, the finest quality of 'intellect,' creates 1) experiencer of That, 2) experiencing That and 3) That experienced (5.14, 7.04 – 7.12). Having achieved Cosmic Consciousness and eliminated impurities from the nervous system through the practice of Karma Yoga (5.11), we "see" That backlighting all. And yet, seeing That confirms separation from That. We join eternal Brahman — the author of

change that does not change — and *'go to the end of rebirth.'* We are That which causes change, yet does not change, and is eternal.

Those established in Brahman, their intellect rooted in the transcendent, break free from rebirth. Moving to the next verse, the enlightened perceive Brahman's evenness in all, even transcending the distinctions of caste. This inclusive vision extends to Brahman's presence in a wise Brahmana, a cow, a dog, an elephant, and even one who has lost their way.

Achieve even vision:

Overview:

In the journey towards achieving an even vision, the seer sees Brahman's Oneness in all and the unbounded essence of Brahman in all beings, transcending the superficial distinctions that often cloud human judgment. This profound perspective is not merely an intellectual acknowledgment but a deep, lived experience that transforms the way one interacts with the world. To actually see Brahman's Oneness in every being is to recognize the inherent unity in divinity that permeates all existence, fostering a sense of compassion and gratitude that transcends societal constructs.

The enlightened see Brahman's unbounded Oneness in all being, whether a wise Brahmana, a cow, an elephant, or even a dog. This even vision embraces a universal perspective that sees all life forms as expressions of the same divine reality: Brahman. This perception is not just an abstract concept but a tangible experience that profoundly impacts one's interactions and relationships with others.

The journey to Brahman Consciousness begins with seeing Brahman's Oneness in all things, a realization that gradually dismantles the walls of ignorance and prejudice. As the mind becomes purified by seeing Oneness in all while engaged in selfless action, the true nature of the Self is unveiled, leading to a state of even-mindedness where pleasure and pain are seen as equal. This equanimity is the hallmark of the Supreme Yogi, who remains unmoved by the dualities of the material world.

Krishna emphasizes the importance of this even vision, urging practitioners to cultivate a steady mind that sees Oneness in all aspects of life while engaged in action. This vision is not about denying the reality of suffering or joy but about transcending the attachment to these experiences. By seeing pleasure and pain as equal, we attain a state of inner peace that is unaffected by external circumstances.

The path to this realization is through the practice of Karma Yoga — dynamically acting selflessly to serve others' desires while innocently sacrificing our own — which integrates the mind and body, aligning them with the higher Self. This union fosters a harmonious relationship between the seer and the seen, where the individual sees Oneness in all beings. Such a vision eliminates the sense of separation, fostering a deep sense of interconnectedness and love for all creation.

Krishna's teachings highlight the practical aspects of achieving this even vision. It is not enough to intellectually understand the concept; one must live it through selfless action. The seeker, seeing Oneness in all while engaged in dynamic activity to serve others, naturally expresses gratitude, love and a sense of purpose aligned with the Creator.

In conclusion, achieving even vision is a transformative process that elevates the practitioner above the dualities of life, fostering a deep sense of unity and gratitude. By seeing Brahman's Oneness in all and thus transcending superficial distinctions, the enlightened experiences a profound connection with the divine, leading to a state of lasting inner peace and fulfillment.

5.18. *The enlightened see That in a cultivated and wise Brahmana, in a cow, in a dog, in an elephant, and even one who has lost their cast.*

'The enlightened' have joined Brahman (previous verse).

The previous verse defines *'That'* unbounded and transcendent Golden Glue holding all in Oneness of Brahman.

Regardless of how the three Gunas manifest in outward appearances and inner qualities, the enlightened see *'That'* evenness in all beings: in the high cast of a Brahmana steeped in Vedic text; in a cow; in a dog; in an elephant; and even in one who has lost the path of evolution. *'The enlightened see That'* even Oneness in everything.

The enlightened perceive the unbounded Brahman in all beings, transcending distinctions. Moving to the following verse, life is mastered by those with equanimity, established in the evenness of Brahman. Recognizing this evenness in all actions, they find contentment, becoming one with the omnipresent Brahman and achieving mastery of life.

5.19. *Even here on earth, life is mastered by those whose mind is established in equanimity of Self. Evenness of Brahman is present in everything. Therefore, they are established in Brahman.*

'Life is mastered' by the nonactive and contented higher Self separate from the Gunas acting on the Gunas (3.28). Out of Self separate from action and the ego of lower self in union with Self, we create all action through the trinity of experience (3.05, 7.04). Actions out of the Gunas of Nature and ego identified with Self naturally follow the course of evolution to the *'highest happiness'* (5.02). Mastery of life indeed.

When *'the mind is established in equanimity of Self,'* we see evenness pervade all action. *'Evenness of Brahman is present in everything'* — all things at all times. We *'are established [settled] in Brahman.'* That is, consciousness structures knowledge (a theme developed in Ch 6 and 7, *Rik Veda*): we come to "know" Brahman through direct and undeniable experience of seeing Brahman's Oneness in the ever-present: *'they are established in Brahman.'*

In this and the following verse, those with a mind established in equanimity, recognizing Brahman's Oneness in all, master life. Their actions, guided by the universal Self, lead to the highest happiness. This mastery arises from an unwavering intellect, untouched by external sensations, realizing Brahman's omnipresence, ultimately establishing them in Brahman.

5.20. *One who neither overly rejoices upon receiving what is pleasant nor grieves upon receiving what is unpleasant, whose intellect is steady, whose mind is undeluded, knowing Brahman, is established in Brahman.*

Being *'established in Brahman'* (previous verse), reactions of joy and sorrow moderate in equanimity of Self and in seeing the evenness of *'That'* at all times (previous verse). We see those circumstances that cause either pleasant or unpleasant feelings in the even light of That. Experiencing evenness in cause, moderates effects of joy and sorrow.

We see the evenness of That permeating everything (previous verse). Established in the evenness of That steadies intellect and mind. Feelings of fullness and familiarity born of steadiness leave little room for doubt and delusion — *'whose mind is undeluded'* — about the Reality and Truth of imperishable Brahman we see in perishable reality.

We know Brahman by intellectually understanding the infusion of Brahman's Oneness into all creation and by directly experiencing That oneness of Brahman by seeing It (4.18, previous verse). Truly *'knowing Brahman'* through understanding and experience, we become *'established in Brahman'* (this verse).

Established in Brahman, the enlightened attain profound knowledge, recognizing the infusion of Brahman's Oneness into all creation. This understanding transforms into direct experience, culminating in being "established in Brahman." As a result, we find imperishable happiness within, unaffected by external stimuli (following verse).

5.21. *He whose self remains unmoved by external sensations knows happiness in the Self. His Self united with Brahman through the Yoga of action, he enjoys imperishable happiness.*

Established in Brahman, evenness permeates circumstances and emotions they engender (previous two verses), promoting perpetual feelings of 'equanimity' and evening out the experience of 'external sensations.' Hence, we are 'unmoved [by the evenness of] external sensations.' Thus, evenness links the experiencer and all that experienced; this evenness linking experiencer and experienced is happiness (5.14). 'He whose self remains unmoved by external sensations knows happiness in the Self.' Established in "imperishable" Brahman and the happiness linking experiencer and experienced, 'His Self united with Brahman [that is, 'established in Brahman' (5.19 - 5.20)] through the Yoga of action, he enjoys imperishable happiness.'

Established in Brahman, one experiences equanimity, moderating reactions to pleasant and unpleasant stimuli (this and the following verse). The evenness of Brahman within dispels the allure of pleasures born of external contact, recognizing their transient nature. The enlightened seek contentment within, untouched by fleeting external pleasures.

Attenuate agitation:

Overview:

Pleasures born of sensory contact are temporary wombs of pain. They are inherently fleeting, beginning and ending, leaving the seeker in a perpetual cycle of desire and dissatisfaction. This cycle traps the ignorant, who continually seek fulfillment in external objects, leading to an unending loop of impression, desire and action. These transient pleasures, while momentarily satisfying, ultimately pale in comparison to the enduring contentment found in the even vision of seeing Brahman's Oneness in all.

In contrast, the enlightened individuals — those who have established themselves in Brahman Consciousness — experience a profound and unwavering happiness. This happiness is not subject to the fluctuations of

external stimuli but is rooted in the eternal nature of the Self. The enlightened understand and directly experience that true contentment does not arise from sensory pleasures but from a state of inner equilibrium. They seek not the fleeting joys of the material world but the enduring bliss of spiritual realization.

Krishna's teachings on Karma Yoga emphasize the futility of seeking lasting happiness in sensory experiences. He advises against getting caught up in the cycle of desire and action, which only leads to further emotional agitation and dissatisfaction. Instead, He advises practicing Karma Yoga, where in Cosmic Consciousness, actions to serve others' desires, while simultaneously seeing Brahman's Oneness in all, further purify the nervous system, establishing it in a state of inner peace.

Desire and anger, often described as formidable enemies, stem from the restless nature of the mind and body's impulses. Born from Rajo Guna, these forces drive individuals to pursue endless material pleasures, leading to a cycle of suffering and emotional pain. Krishna asserts that those who naturally Self-resist these agitations through the strength of inner contentment achieved through the practice of Karma Yoga are truly Self-disciplined and achieve genuine happiness.

In conclusion, Krishna's teachings in the *Bhagavad Gita* highlight the stark contrast between transient sensory pleasures and the enduring happiness achieved in selflessly serving others' desires while in a state of Cosmic Consciousness — further purifying the nervous system by dynamically acting to serve others' desires while simultaneously experiencing the inner fulfillment from seeing Brahman's Oneness in all. Further, the enlightened, established in Brahman Consciousness, seek not the fleeting joys of external objects but the happiness of spiritual realization. They achieve a state of inner equilibrium and true happiness, transcending the transient nature of sensory contact. Krishna's profound wisdom guides action toward a path of lasting fulfillment, liberation and inner peace.

5.22. *All pleasures born of contact are wombs of pain. They begin and end, Arjuna. The enlightened seek not contentment in them.*

This verse contrasts the previous, where established in Brahman the sensation of evenness experienced in the process of experiencing renders happiness. In this verse, pleasures are born of contact rather than evenness linking experiencer and experienced. 'They [contacts] *begin and end*,' as does the fleeting happiness they engender. The ignorant get caught in the

cycle of impression-desire-action (2.39). '*The enlightened*' — those established in Brahman (5.19 – 5.21) — experience the even contentment of eternal happiness (previous verse); pleasures born of contact pale in comparison. '*The enlightened seek not contentment in them.*'

Krishna asserts that pleasures from sensory contact are transient, warning against seeking happiness and contentment in them. Transitioning to the following verse, He describes true discipline as spontaneously resisting the agitation of desire and anger, emphasizing the happiness attained by those who maintain such Self-control.

5.23. *He who, even before liberation from the body, resist the agitation of desire and anger is [Self-] disciplined. He is a happy man.*

The combined force of '*desire and anger*' is not a trifling matter and has earned the reputation of '*evil*' and '*enemy here on earth*': *The force is desire; the force is anger. The force is born of Rajo Guna, all-consuming and most evil. Know this to be your enemy here on earth*' (3.37).

The previous verse defines perfect discipline as the profound effect of '*imperishable happiness*' affecting thoughts and actions: Self-discipline. Seeing That evenness of Brahman's Oneness in everything (5.17), established in imperishable happiness and unmoved by external sensations (previous verse), naturally attenuates '*desire and anger.*' Hence, we naturally '*resist the agitation [born of] desire and anger*' through our imperishable happiness. '*He is a happy man.*'

Those who resist the agitation of desire and anger attain happiness and discipline. This discipline, born from imperishable happiness and Self-control, defines a "happy man." Moving to the following verse, the Yogi finding happiness within, illuminated by Brahman, achieves eternal freedom and Brahman consciousness, transcending the ephemeral nature of external pleasures.

See the transcendent:

Overview:

The *Bhagavad Gita* emphasizes that the enlightened individual finds happiness, contentment and light from within. This state of being leads to eternal freedom in Brahman Consciousness, a consciousness that transcends the limitations of the physical and mental realms. The journey to this state involves a profound shift from seeking pleasure and satisfaction in

external objects to realizing the imperishable peace that lies within. This shift is not just a philosophical ideal but a practical approach to life that aligns one's actions with the eternal principles of Brahman.

The enlightened individual does not seek contentment in external contacts or sensory pleasures, knowing — through intellectual understanding and direct experience of seeing Oneness in all — that these are fleeting and ultimately unsatisfying. Instead, the seeker naturally functions from within, establishing an evenness of mind and an inner peace that remains unaffected by external circumstances. This inner equilibrium is the hallmark of one who is established in Brahman Consciousness, where the light of Brahman — backlighting all — illuminates all aspects of life.

While Brahman causes all action, it remains uninvolved in action, symbolizing the highest form of renunciation and austerity. Similarly, an individual established in Brahman Consciousness achieves a state of eternal freedom from action, witnessing life and its activities without attachment. This state of witnessing allows actions to flow naturally, guided by the principles of spiritual and material evolution, leading to inner contentment and happiness.

In this journey of Self-realization, the seeker experiences a profound transformation. Happiness derived from within, illuminated by the light of Brahman's Oneness, leads to a state of eternal freedom. This inner happiness is distinct from the fleeting pleasures of the external world, as it is rooted in the eternal and unchanging reality of Brahman.

The seers — those who see Brahman's Oneness in all — with their sins destroyed and doubts dispelled attain the freedom of Brahman. These individuals see the Self as separate from activity, witnessing life as a natural progression of spiritual and material evolution. They see the Oneness of Brahman in all things, experiencing an evenness of mind and a profound sense of inner peace. Their actions, free from selfish desires, align with the universal principles of Brahman, leading to a state of liberation.

The destruction of sins in this context implies a state of nonaction, where no room for sin exists because actions are no longer driven by selfish desires. Established in Brahman's austerity, the seeker transcends the consequences of past actions, living in a state of purity and liberation. Doubts are dispelled through the realization of the Self's separation from relative existence, leading to a steady intellect and unwavering inner peace.

Those who delight in the welfare of all beings naturally transcend selfish individuality, achieving a sense of universal oneness. This kinship with all

beings fosters feelings of love, compassion and most importantly, gratitude, lifting the individual above the confines of selfish thoughts and actions. Thus, we experience the freedom of Brahman Consciousness as a natural austerity from action, where the individual lives in harmony with the universal principles of existence.

For Self-disciplined individuals who have cast away desire and anger, whose thoughts are Self-controlled, the freedom of Brahman exists in everything. These individuals, rooted in Brahman Consciousness, naturally renounce action, experiencing the inner freedom of Brahman in all aspects of life. Their Self-disciplined minds remain unaffected by external influences, finding peace and contentment within. This state of being is marked by a profound sense of inner happiness and a harmonious relationship with the world.

In conclusion, the *Bhagavad Gita* offers a profound commentary on the nature of true happiness and the path to eternal freedom. By finding happiness from within and aligning one's actions with the principles of Brahman, an individual attains a state of inner peace and liberation. This journey of Self-realization leads to a profound transformation, where the light of Brahman illuminates all aspects of life, guiding the individual to eternal peace.

5.24. He who finds happiness from within, contentment from within and lit from within, this Yogi who finds eternal freedom in Brahman, attains Brahman Consciousness.

'He is a happy man' (previous verse) who is simply grateful for everything. Everything: the good, the bad, the ...

'He who finds happiness from within' refers to verses 5.21 and 5.23: 'he enjoys imperishable happiness' and 'he is a happy man,' respectively. Happiness does not come from external sources (5.22). Instead, he 'finds happiness from within' in the process of "experiencing" born of Nature (5.14, 5.21).

'The enlightened seek not contentment in them [external contacts]' (5.22). Instead, the enlightened naturally function from within. 'Established in Brahman' (5.19 – 5.20), the sensation of evenness comes from within, rendering equanimity, inner contentment and happiness.

Though Brahman causes all action, Brahman remains uninvolved in action (4.18). Consequently, Brahman is the highwater mark of renunciation from action — and of austerity from action. Established in Brahman (5.19 – 5.20), we too live in 'eternal freedom' from action. We silently witness our actions

go of Nature's accord to further spiritual and material evolution, seeing the light of That, content and happy from within, '*This Yogi who finds eternal freedom in Brahman [from within], attains Brahman Consciousness,*' attains eternal renunciation, austere to mental and physical actions of lower self.

The Yogi, finding happiness within, attains eternal freedom in Brahman. This inner happiness, distinct from external sources, is illuminated by the light of Brahman's Oneness. Moving to the following verse, "seers" with Self-controlled minds, devoid of desire and anger, attain the freedom of Brahman, finding joy in the welfare of all beings.

5.25. *These seers, sins destroyed and doubts dispelled, whose selves are controlled, who delights in the welfare of all beings, attains the freedom of Brahman.*

'Seers' see the Self as separate from activity, silently witness life go of Nature's accord to further spiritual and material evolution, see Oneness of Brahman in everything at all times, "experience" evenness in all, and finally, actually see the transcendent light of Oneness permeating all.

'Sins [are] destroyed' only when one does not act in any way whatsoever; leaving no possible room for action leaves no possible room for sin. Established in the renunciation of Brahman (previous verse), sinful acts are impossible because we do not act at all. In addition, establishment in the nonaction of Brahman shields us from the consequences of past actions. [4.36; 5.10: '*Acting in accord with Brahman, having abandoned attachments, his acts are untainted by sin as a lotus leaf by water.*']

'Doubts dispelled.' Feelings of fullness born from experiencing evenness, happiness and steady intellect, and truly seeing the transcendent, dispel doubts about the separation of Self from action. That is, dispel doubts about renunciation from action.

'Whose selves are controlled' by the '*Self of all beings*' (5.07). The lower self is individuality. In Cosmic Consciousness the lower self unites with higher Self; individual unites with universal. Seeing Oneness of Brahman in all beings and established in Brahman (5.19, 5.20), the lower self gains universality in the Oneness of That. In this way, liberation in universal Self established in Brahman controls individual self by permeating self with That (5.17 – 5.18; also for "control," see verse 2.61).

'Who delights in the welfare of all beings.' We see That Oneness of Brahman in ourselves and all beings (5.18). Out of universal Oneness, identification

with all beings, evenness (5.18 – 5.19), and happiness (5.21 – 5.24). We delight in the welfare of all beings we create through ego for the purpose of happiness, which links experiencer and experienced.

'Attains the freedom of Brahman.' Being the eternal non-doer, Brahman remains austere from action. Established in Brahman (5.19 – 5.20), we too achieve freedom in austerity from action (previous verse). In addition, delighting in the welfare of all beings renders feelings of kinship with all, which in turn, lift us above the confines of isolation and selfish individuality. Separate from all by seeing That in all beings (5.17), we feel liberated from selfish feelings, thoughts and actions in our love of all.

For this and the following verse, established in Brahman, “seers” who delight in the welfare of all beings attain freedom. Their disciplined minds, free from desire and anger, effortlessly Self-control thoughts. Casting off the shackles of external pleasures, they find eternal freedom within, attaining Brahman Consciousness and experiencing the natural austerity of nonaction in everything.

5.26. For disciplined men who have cast away desire and anger, whose thoughts are [Self-] controlled, who know the Self, freedom of Brahman exists in everything.

Disciplined men established in Brahman (5.19 – 5.20), acting to fulfill cosmic purpose, spontaneously renounce action (5.24 – 5.25). Rising to the bait of strong emotions naturally lies outside the experience of *'[Self-] disciplined men'* (5.23).

Living in the Self separate from action and unmoved by external sensations, they cast off desire and anger (5.23). Individuality of lower self *'mastered'* by realizing the universality of higher Self, *'thoughts are controlled'* by evenness of steady intellect (5.07, 5.19, previous verse). Being established in Brahman, *'freedom of Brahman'* [that is, natural austerity from action] *'exists in everything'* because Brahman is in all things (4.18).

Self-disciplined individuals, rooted in Brahman, effortlessly renounce action, experiencing the freedom of Brahman in all things. Moving to the following verse, such Yogis, having renounced external influences, center their attention within the spiritual region, symbolized by the space between eyebrows. Here, breath becomes a rhythmic flow, embodying the essence of Brahman Consciousness.

Attain inner peace:

Overview:

Inner peace, a state of serene contentment, is often considered the pinnacle of spiritual wellbeing. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* provide profound insights into achieving this elusive state by guiding the practitioner through a journey of Selfless action, Self-control, sacrifice of desires, and alignment with the higher Self.

Settling Attention Within: The journey towards inner peace begins by sacrificing desire and so, spontaneously turning attention inward. In this internalization we naturally leave external contacts and their effects behind. By abandoning the distractions of the external world, we create a space where our awareness settles into our spiritual center, fostering a deep sense of contentment and happiness from within.

Renunciation and Liberation: When our attention is firmly rooted within, we experience the evenness of breath as a rhythmic flow of Oneness, connecting us to universal consciousness. This transition marks the beginning of a Self-disciplined practice where the seeker, Self-controlling the senses and mind of lower self by happiness, achieves liberation from desires, fear and anger. The departure of these disturbances signifies a perpetual state of liberation, grounded in the all-pervading evenness of Brahman Consciousness.

Self-Control and Permanent Liberation: A seer — one who see Brahman's Oneness in all — whose senses, mind and intellect of lower self are Self-controlled, attains a state of permanent liberation. This Self-control stems from all-pervading evenness of seeing Oneness in all. By naturally abandoning the evils of desires, fear and anger, which are engendered by external contacts, the seer finds that imperishable happiness wells up from within. This inner happiness liberates the practitioner from attachments and bondage to actions, serving as the basis for all feelings, thoughts and actions. Consequently, living in the present, amidst happiness and Nature's administration of desires and actions, becomes a natural state of Being.

Understanding Krishna's Role: Attaining inner peace is deeply connected to understanding Krishna as the enjoyer of sacrifices and the Lord of the world. By aligning with His consciousness, practitioners transcend worldly attachments and attain peace. This alignment results in calmness that dominates the lower self's intellect, mind and senses, separating the lower self from the higher Self, while being united with it. As the practitioner

recognizes Krishna's omnipresence, their actions become spontaneous expressions of divine will, free from the burdens of personal expectation and desire.

Conclusion: The path to inner peace, as elucidated by the *Bhagavad Gita*, involves a journey of turning inward, naturally sacrificing desire — by selflessly serving others' desires — and spontaneously renouncing external influences and aligning with the higher Self. Through Self-control, liberation from desires, and understanding Krishna's role in the cosmic order, practitioners achieve a state of perpetual inner peace. This peace, rooted in the evenness of Brahman Consciousness, transforms our interactions with the world, leading to a life of profound contentment and harmony.

5.27. Leaving external contacts outside, attention settles within the eyebrows, even inhalation and exhalation moves through the nostrils.

In previous verses we go to the end of rebirth (5.17), know Brahman (5.20), become established in Brahman (5.19 – 5.20), unite with Brahman (5.21), and attain Brahman Consciousness (5.24).

Having renounced all actions (previous verse), we leave 'external contacts outside.' We abandon effects external contacts have on the flow of consciousness. Happy and content within, awareness settles into the spiritual center 'within the eyebrows.' The evenness of 'inhalation and exhalation moving through the nostrils' — this physical experience of Oneness — fills the senses, mind, intellect, ego, and the universe we create (7.04).

Relinquishing external influences, attention focuses within, settling at the spiritual center 'within the eyebrows.' Inhalation and exhalation become a rhythmic flow of Oneness. Transitioning to the following verse, the Self-disciplined sage, controlling senses and mind by imperishable happiness, is liberated from desires, fear and anger. The departure of these disturbances marks perpetual liberation, rooted in the all-pervading evenness of Brahman Consciousness.

5.28. The sage whose senses, mind and intellect are Self-controlled, from whom desires, fear and anger have departed, is forever liberated.

The experience of all-pervading evenness (previous verse) 'controls [evens functioning of, if you will] senses, mind and intellect.' Abandoning 'external contacts' (previous verse), the evils of 'desires, fear, and anger' engendered by 'external contacts' depart. Feelings of 'imperishable happiness' well-up

from within, liberating us from attachments and bondage to action. In addition, '*imperishable happiness*' serves as the basis for all feelings, thoughts and actions. Consequently, we are '*forever liberated*'; we have renounced all involvement in action by '*imperishable happiness*'; we live in the present amidst — and controlled by — happiness and Nature's administration of desires and actions desire seeds.

Disciplined individuals, their senses, mind, and intellect experience perpetual liberation by naturally renouncing desires, fear and anger, anchored in the happiness of imperishable happiness. Transitioning to the following verse, those who understand Krishna as the enjoyer of sacrifices and the Lord of the world attain peace by aligning with His consciousness, transcending worldly attachments. Resulting from imperishable happiness, calmness dominates intellect, mind and senses separating lower self from higher Self.

5.29. *Having known Me, the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, The Mighty Lord of all the world and friend to all beings, he attains peace.*

"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him." — *Genesis 1:27*.

'Me,' that is, Lord Krishna is the enjoyer of '*sacrifices*' (4.24 – 4.30) and '*austerities*' (4.10 – 4.14); '*Mighty Lord of all the world*' who informs Nature — through His principle of increase — to carry out His creation (4.05 – 4.06, 7.04 – 7.12); and sustainer [Vishnu the sustainer] of '*imperishable happiness*' (5.21) and '*friend to all beings*' (5.25).

"Form follows function," Louis Sullivan. Forever liberated from attachment and bondage to action — that is, living in the present (previous verse) — we naturally function from His level of consciousness. We inherently '*sacrifice*' desire to support life and evolution (5.10 – 5.11). Purified through action to achieve cosmic purpose of universal happiness, we enjoy the '*austerities*' of higher Self separate from indulgent lower self (5.07, 5.11). Through Nature *via* the ego, we create our '*world*' and the happiness governing its functioning (5.14 – 5.21; 7.04 – 7.12). Befriending all by bestowing expansion of happiness into creation, we delight in the welfare of '*all beings*' (5.25). Immersed in the even happiness of our creation, we operate above agitation of desire and anger (5.23). Having '*cast away*' strong emotions, '*thoughts controlled*' by the all-pervasive evenness of happiness flooding the universe (previous verse), knowing the '*Self*' as austere from action, and forever experiencing the '*freedom of Brahman*' in all creation (5.26), calmness separates Self from action. Out of calmness, we attain '*peace*' in Brahman

Consciousness (Table 1: States of Consciousness in a Nutshell). In calmness, the role of action in evolution wanes; calmness becomes the means (following chapter).

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 6: God Consciousness — See God Everywhere

To achieve Cosmic and Brahman Consciousness, action is said to be the means; to achieve God Consciousness, calmness is said to be the means.

Commentary on Ch 6 verses 1 – 47:

Calmness trumps action:

Overview:

In our daily lives, action often takes center stage, captivating our minds and driving our pursuits. Yet, calmness, rather than action, holds the key to true ascension in the practice of Yoga. For one who has ascended to Yoga, calmness is not merely a state of being but the essential means to further evolution and liberation.

Calmness, in its purest form, maintains the Self separate from the turbulence of action. It is a stillness that resides deep within, defining us beyond the ephemeral nature of our deeds and thoughts. Having achieved Brahman Consciousness, this calmness does not require deliberate cultivation through practices like meditation; instead, it emerges naturally, unfettered by the need for action. Through this inherent calmness, the Self finds its true essence and pathway to liberation.

Krishna emphasizes the distinction between aspirants and those who have ascended to Yoga. For the aspirants, action remains the prescribed means to advance on the spiritual path. However, for those who have achieved inner peace in Brahman Consciousness, the focus shifts to a calm mind, free from fear and unwaveringly fixed on the transcendent reality. This state of calmness is not an active pursuit but a serene presence that nurtures the separation of the Self from the distractions of the material world.

Calmness acts as the foundation for spiritual growth and liberation. It is not the practice of calmness but calmness itself that becomes the vehicle for higher evolution. This serene state fosters a sense of detachment from actions, allowing the Self to rise above the mundane and connect with the divine essence.

The beauty of this teaching lies in its simplicity and profundity. Calmness, devoid of action, stands as the beacon of spiritual progress. Amidst the

chaos of life, finding and nurturing this inner calm can lead to the ultimate goal of Yoga: liberation. By embracing this calmness, we align ourselves with the true essence of the yogic path, transcending the need for action and stepping into a realm of profound inner peace and Self-realization.

He who performs his duty while renouncing the fruits of action is a Sanyasi and a Yogi; not he who lights no fire and fails to perform actions. The duty to further evolution differs for Sanyasi and Yogi, involving contemplation for the Sanyasi and mental and physical actions for the Yogi. The Sanyasi achieves contentment and happiness by revelation of the Self separate from action, while the Yogi achieves this by direct experience of the Self separate from action. Inner states of contentment and happiness naturally eliminate the desire for fruits and the actions seeded by desires. On the level of Brahman, both actions and fruits are completely renounced. Both Sanyasi and Yogi experience peace in Brahman Consciousness.

Krishna introduces the concept of the Sanyasi/Yogi, highlighting the essence of performing duty without attachment. This lays the foundation for understanding that true Yoga involves relinquishing the incentive of desire. The paths of selfless action and spontaneous renunciation of desire become fundamental aspects of the spiritual journey — for both paths.

Krishna points out that a true Yogi is synonymous with a Sanyasi, emphasizing the necessity of relinquishing desire. He introduces the importance of action as a means for aspiring Yogis, detailing how it aids those on the path to spiritual ascent and self-purification — ridding the nervous system of fear and anger.

For the aspirant wishing to ascend to Yoga, action is said to be the means; for one who has ascended to Yoga, calmness is said to be the means. This notion lies central to gaining God Consciousness. Brahman Consciousness stands atop Mt. Yoga, accomplished through duty to spiritual evolution. Standing as Brahman, free from desire, action, and even the incentive of desire, we attain inner peace. Calmness maintains the Self separate from action, defining us deep within. This calmness, of its own accord, furthers evolution without the need for action.

Krishna defines action as the means for aspirants. He emphasizes that a calm mind, free from fear and fixed on the transcendent, signifies the true essence of the yogic path. Calmness fosters the separation of the Self from action and paves the way for liberation.

One who has ascended to Yoga is neither attached to objects of the senses nor to actions to experience them. He has relinquished all incentive of desire. Having ascended Mt. Yoga, the Self stands calm and Self-sufficient, needing nothing. This calmness precludes the draw of happiness promised by objects of the senses and consequently, attachments to those objects and selfish desires and actions to experience them. Self-sufficient calmness vanquishes the incentive of desire to find happiness in disruptive objects of the senses.

Krishna describes the desire-free state of a Yogi. He instructs on Self-raising and Self-degrading, highlighting the Yogi's capacity to conquer the self through calmness and achieve contentment. These verses illustrate the pivotal role of inner calmness in the yogic journey, emphasizing Self-referral for evolution.

6.01. He who performs his duty, while renouncing fruits of action, is a Sanyasi and a Yogi; not he who lights no fire and fails to perform actions.

Duty to further evolution differs for 'Sanyasi' and 'Yogi,' the act of contemplation for the Sanyasi, and mental and physical actions to achieve outcomes for the 'Yogi.' The Sanyasi achieves contentment and happiness by revelation of Self separate from action (3.05). The Yogi achieves contentment and happiness by direct experience of Self separate from action (3.05). Inner states of contentment and happiness naturally eliminate desire for fruits and the actions desires seed to attain fruits. Actions and fruits are completely renounced on the level of Brahman. For both Sanyasi and Yogi, paths of action have achieved their purpose. Sanyasi and Yogi experience peace in Brahman Consciousness (5.29).

He without desire and energy to achieve higher states of consciousness ('no fire') and he 'who ... fails to perform actions' to further spiritual evolution will neither perform 'their duty' nor renounce 'fruits of action.' Such a man lives on the horizontal plane of life. For him, ephemeral states of happiness and contentment compose a life of attachment and bondage, a life in dark ignorance of Self separate from action. He finds no 'peace' in Brahman Consciousness (5.29).

Krishna introduces the concept of the Sanyasi/Yogi, highlighting the essence of performing duty without attachment. This lays the foundation for the following verse, which emphasizes that true Yoga involves relinquishing the incentive of desire. Connected, these verses outline the path of selfless action and spontaneous renunciation of desire as fundamental aspects of the spiritual journey.

6.02. Know that called Sanyasi to be Yoga. No one becomes a Yogi without relinquishing the incentive of desire.

The previous verse drew on the elimination of desire for fruits and natural renunciation of action to show equal footing for accomplished Sanyasi and Yogi. This verse drills deeper into the *'incentive of desire.'*

'No one becomes a Yogi without relinquishing the incentive of desire.' The Yogi, experiencing the fullness of union with Brahman relinquishes incentive of desire (4.19). In union with Brahman, he sees evenness among objects of the senses (5.19 - 5.21), erasing distinctions between this and that. Seeing Brahman's creation of good and increase in everything (4.18), everything promises happiness equally. Fruits lose their unique appeal to promise happiness. For the Yogi, incentive is gone.

Krishna points out the same is true for the Sanyasi, in union with Brahman the Sanyasi too has lost *'the incentive of desire.'*

Krishna's take-home message: accomplished Sanyasi and Yogi attain peace with separation of Self from activity in Brahman Consciousness. In peace, desire and incentive evaporate in renunciation of action. Paths of Sanyasi and Yogi have merged. Both have achieved complete renunciation of action in the *'peace'* of Brahman Consciousness. For both *Sanyasi and Yogi* (6.01), action has run its course. Dharma wanes (following verse).

Krishna establishes that a true Yogi is synonymous with a Sanyasi, emphasizing the necessity of relinquishing desire. Linked to the following verse, He introduces the importance of action as a means for aspiring Yogis, detailing how it aids those on the path to spiritual ascent and self-purification — ridding the nervous system of fear and anger.

6.03. *For the aspirant wishing to ascend to Yoga, action is said to be the means; for one who has ascended to Yoga, calmness is said to be the means.*

This verse lies central to this chapter and gaining God Consciousness.

Brahman Consciousness stands atop Mt Yoga. *'Duty'* to spiritual evolution (6.01) accomplished the ascent. We stand as Brahman, free from desire, action and even incentive of desire (6.02). We have attained inner peace and calmness (5.29).

'For one who has ascended to Yoga, calmness is said to be the means.' *'Calmness'* maintains Self separate from action. Deep within, calmness of Self always defines us. Calmness of its own accord — no action required — furthers evolution. Indeed, *'Calmness [and only calmness] is said to be the means.'* As we shall see in subsequent verses, this is calmness itself, not the practice of calmness, as in meditation.

Krishna defines action as the means for aspirants. Linking to the following verse, He emphasizes that a calm mind, free from fear and fixed on the transcendent, signifies the yogic path's true essence. Calmness is reiterated as the crucial means, fostering separation of Self from action and paving the way for liberation.

6.04. One who has ascended to Yoga is neither attached to objects of the senses nor to actions to experience them. He has relinquished all incentive of desire.

Having ascended Mt Yoga, the Self stands calm and Self-sufficient and needs nothing. Calmness precludes the draw of happiness promised in objects of the senses and consequently, attachments to those objects and selfish desire and action to experience them. Self-sufficient calmness vanquishes the incentive of desire to find happiness in disruptive objects of the senses.

Krishna describes the desire-free state of a Yogi. Transitioning to the following verse, He instructs on self-raising and self-degrading, highlighting the Yogi's capacity to conquer the self through calmness and achieve contentment. These verses illustrate the pivotal role of inner calmness in the yogic journey, emphasizing Self-referral for evolution.

Spontaneous meditation of the Self — Self-referral:

Overview:

In Krishna's teachings we find a timeless lesson about the interplay between our higher Self and lower self. Krishna instructs us to "raise his self by his Self" and cautions against letting the lower self degrade our inner calm. This wisdom illuminates the pivotal role of the higher Self in guiding us toward a state of tranquil stability.

Our higher contented Self, imbued with calmness, acts as a steadfast friend. When the higher Self influences our thoughts and actions, we experience tranquility that permeates every aspect of our being. This calmness elevates us, enabling us to navigate life's challenges with grace, composure and creativity. Conversely, when our lower self dominates, we risk overshadowing the higher Self with the lower self's wanderings and limitations, thereby losing the precious calm it bestows upon us.

In Brahman Consciousness, where higher Self and inner peace prevail, calmness infuses our being, allowing us to recover from external circumstances that pull lower self away from the friendship higher Self

bestows upon it. However, when the higher Self fails to befriend lower self, we lose the soothing influence of the higher Self, feeling abandoned and grappling with tumultuous emotions.

The Yogi, who masters this art of Self influencing self, finds in the higher Self a steadfast ally, offering unwavering stability amidst life's dualities. This Yogi embodies calmness, remaining unaffected by the extremes of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, honor and disgrace. The higher Self, in its infinite wisdom, steadies the mind of lower self, mutually benefiting lower and higher levels of self and ensuring that calmness prevails.

The Yogi's journey toward enlightenment is marked by unshakeable calmness and contentment in understanding and experience. Lower self united with higher Self, the Yogi transcends sensory distractions, treating earth, stone and gold with equal indifference. This profound tranquility leads to enlightenment, where the Yogi remains steadfast in calm Self, embodying the union of mind and spirit.

Krishna's teachings emphasize the Yogi's innate impartiality and neutrality. The Yogi, grounded in the unwavering calmness of the higher Self, addresses every situation from a wellspring of potential, free from preconceptions and judgments.

This equal-minded individual rises above the fray, distinguished by the friendship between inner and outer calmness. Such a person, unbiased and confident, remains fearless in the face of life's challenges, embodying a rare and noble quality.

Self-referral: Through its influence on the lower self, calm Self refers self back to Self when it wanders off. The Yogi, having gained Brahman Consciousness, always collects himself on the Self by spontaneously referring the lower self back to the higher Self. '*Calmness is said to be the means.*' In union, the lower self and higher Self act as one. When the mind of the lower self, under the influence of desire, takes attention away from the inner calmness of Self to some agitated state, the lower self, directed by its intellect identified with the higher Self, naturally comes home to the higher Self, no overt effort in controlling the mind involved. Subsequently, the Self befriends the mind of the lower self back to the calm sanctuary of the higher Self, calming mind, senses and body. The lower self, calm and content, in need of nothing, is free of longing for possessions and holding onto them.

This meditation — lower self under the influence of higher Self returning itself to calmness of higher Self — is not a deliberate or forceful practice but an

inherent and spontaneous process where the higher Self's influence ensures that the lower self remains aligned and integrated. The intellect, aligned with the higher Self, facilitates this natural homecoming, bringing the lower self back to the higher Self's true nature of calmness and contentment. Through this effortless process of spontaneous meditation, the Yogi achieves a profound state of tranquility that runs on autopilot, where the lower self no longer seeks fulfillment in external possessions or desires, having found complete satisfaction within the Self's calmness

In summary, spontaneous meditation in Brahman Consciousness involves the continuous referral of the lower self to the higher Self. This process of returning to inner calmness, guided by the intellect aligned with the higher Self, ensures that the Yogi's mind spontaneously returns to a state of tranquility, free from the disturbances of desire and possessions.

6.05. Let a man raise his self by his Self. Let him not degrade his Self. For the Self alone can be a friend to the self. Or the Self alone can be an enemy to the self.

Higher Self influences lower self and *vice-versa*. Calmness of higher Self 'raises the self by the Self.' We feel, think and act calmly under the influence of Self's calmness. On the other hand, 'Let him not degrade his Self' by letting lower self agitate higher Self and overshadow the experience of calmness. Choose calmness; do not run away with agitated self; let not the self 'degrade' calmness of Self.

Higher Self is lower self's only friend and a good one: possessed of calmness, reliable and willing to help. 'For the Self alone can be a friend to the self' by rendering calmness to it. 'Or the Self alone can be an enemy to the self.' When higher Self's calmness is lost to lower self's agitation, lower self suffers without relief from higher Self.

This verse establishes the desire-free state of an accomplished Yogi. This tranquility links to the following verse, emphasizing the pivotal role of calmness as the means for self-raising. Calmness, the conduit for Self-referral, enables the Yogi to navigate the dualities of life, fostering inner stability and paving the path to higher states of consciousness.

6.06. For him who has conquered the self by the Self, the Self is a friend. But for him who has not conquered the self by the Self, the Self remains hostile like an enemy.

In Brahman Consciousness, higher Self conquers lower self by infusing it with calmness. In this case 'the Self is a friend' (previous verse). 'But for him

who has not conquered the self by the Self,' lower self agitates higher Self and the calming influence of Self is lost. It is as if higher Self has turned its back on the lower self and lets it stew in sticky juices of bondage. 'The Self remains hostile like an enemy' because it fails to share its calmness. Indeed, blame lies squarely on the shoulders of higher Self for letting lower self get away with it.

Krishna illuminates the consequences of conquering or failing to conquer the self. The subsequent verse emphasizes that for the Yogi, the Self becomes a steadfast ally, providing unwavering stability amid life's dualities, embodying calmness and standing undisturbed by external circumstances like cold, heat, pleasure, pain, honor, and disgrace.

6.07. For him who conquers the self, who remains deep in peace, the Self remains steadfast in cold, heat, pleasure, and pain. Too, in honor and disgrace.

'Deep in peace' of Brahman Consciousness (5.29), 'calmness' of Self pervades the mind of lower self (previous verse), steadying it in extreme dualities of 'cold, heat ... honor and disgrace.' Extremes dualities in physical, emotional and psychological stimuli fail to overshadow the influence of calmness higher Self has on lower self, mutually benefiting the Self and self, and forever leaving Self 'steadfast' in peace of Brahman Consciousness (5.29).

Krishna unveils the Yogi's unwavering calmness amidst dualities. Linked to the following verse, He emphasizes the Yogi's union with contentment and knowledge, unmoved by sensory distractions. This union leads to enlightenment, where the Yogi remains unshakable, treating earth, stone, and gold alike and attains profound tranquility.

6.08. The Yogi is united who is contented in knowledge and experience, who is unshakable with conquered senses, who earth, stone and gold are the same. He attains enlightenment.

Here, 'knowledge' is a matter of understanding the underlying nature of calmness to befriend the self (6.05 - 6.06). Feeling calm in the helter-skelter of daily life conjures an undeniable experience of Self calming self. Thinking and feeling unite in conquering the senses. Calmness maintains equal and indifferent sensation of 'earth, stone and gold' regardless of touch, usefulness and value. We experience Oneness of Brahman through all the senses.

In transitioning from this verse to the following, Krishna emphasizes the Yogi's unity and enlightenment. A Yogi, content in knowledge and conquered

senses, achieves enlightenment, embodying equality towards friends and foes. This unity of mind and spirit distinguishes the Yogi, paving the way for deeper insights into impartiality, neutrality and discernment in the pursuit of God-consciousness.

6.09. He who is equal-minded toward friends, companions, and enemies, who is neutral among enemies and kinsmen, and who is impartial among righteous and evil-doers, is distinguished among men.

Here, Krishna addresses the nature of silent calmness, every ready to address situations from a wellspring of full potential unencumbered by either preconception or judgment.

'Equal-minded,' naturally he lives in the silence of calmness — where calmness of Self calms mind of lower self — and considers all in the same light regardless of expectations of either harmony or disharmony. *'Neutral among enemies and kinsmen'* inherently he remains balanced in silent calmness, equally ready to address hate and love appropriately. *'Impartial among righteous and evil-doers,'* he instinctively remains unbiased, confident and fearless in the silence of calmness regardless of perceived effect of outside influences on his evolution.

'Distinguished,' an equal-minded, neutral and impartial person rises above the fray on the merit of inner and outer calmness, a rare and noble quality, indeed.

Krishna describes the even-minded Yogi who, in the following verse, consistently directs attention to the calm Self. The Yogi maintains calmness, balancing the inner and outer, allowing the Self to naturally influence and return the wavering mind to its serene nature through the practice of self-discipline and Self-referral.

6.10. The Yogi always collects himself on the Self; remaining in seclusion, alone, his mind and body calmed, desiring nothing and free of possessions.

The calm higher Self spontaneously guides the lower self back to its state of inner calmness. The Yogi, having attained Brahman Consciousness, naturally centers on the Self by continually referring the lower self to the higher Self. Calmness, as mentioned in 6.03, is the means to this end. In this union, the lower self and higher Self act as one.

When the mind of the lower self, influenced by desire, diverts from the inner calmness of the Self to an agitated state, the lower self — under the guidance of an intellect identified with the higher Self — naturally returns to the higher Self. The Self, remaining *'alone'*, in seclusion and calm, befriends

and guides the lower self back to tranquility. The mind of lower self, calmed and content, becomes desireless and free from the need for possessions.

This Self-referral is not a deliberate or forceful practice but an inherent and spontaneous process. The higher Self's influence ensures that the lower self remains aligned and integrated. The intellect, when aligned with the higher Self, facilitates this natural homecoming, bringing the mind of lower self back to calmness and contentment.

Through this effortless process, the Yogi achieves a profound state of tranquility, where the lower self no longer seeks fulfillment in external possessions or desires. Complete satisfaction is found within the Self. Self-referral is the refined practice of Karma Yoga, where action (Karma) is the intellect identifying with the Self and union (Yoga) is the higher Self befriending the lower self.

In summary, Self-referral in Brahman Consciousness involves the continuous, spontaneous referral of the lower self to the higher Self. This process of returning to inner calmness, guided by an intellect aligned with the higher Self, ensures that the Yogi's mind spontaneously returns to a state of perpetual tranquility. This state is free from the disturbances of desire and possessions. The Yogi, in Brahman Consciousness, finds complete fulfillment and contentment within the Self, experiencing an effortless and spontaneous union of the lower self with the higher Self.

Liberation:

Overview:

The following five verses offer a profound exploration of Self-referral (previous verse), a process that transcends simple explanation. These verses delve into the intricate and increasingly subtle aspects of mind-body connection (6.11), attention (6.12), Self-awareness (6.13), submission (6.14), and ultimate liberation (6.15).

Each verse encapsulates a specific aspect of this spontaneous and natural spiritual journey of Self-referral, using rich metaphors to convey deeper meanings that guide the seeker towards enlightenment. These metaphors apply across millennia, appropriately fitting the needs of the time — for all times. This timeless applicability underscores the universality of the spiritual truths contained within these verses. Whether it be ancient sages or modern seekers, the metaphors resonate with the fundamental human experience, transcending cultural and temporal boundaries.

Furthermore, the subsequent verses under the section “Self-referral” (6.24 – 6.28) provide an even more detailed examination of these themes. In “Self-referral,” each verse corresponds directly to a stage in the transformative process, offering a one-to-one/verse-to-verse correspondence that deepens our understanding. These verses in “Self-referral” delve into the nuances of self-awareness, the interplay between the higher Self and lower self, and the direct path to God Consciousness. They serve as a precise roadmap, guiding the seeker through the intricate layers of spiritual growth and self-realization. Through these detailed explorations, the seeker gains a clearer, more profound comprehension of the path to enlightenment, reinforcing the timeless relevance and wisdom of these teachings.

6.11. *Finding a firm seat for himself in a clean place, neither too high nor too low, covered with kusha grass, deerskin and cloth,*

Mind-body: The natural impulse to return back to calm Self (previous verse) in a settled state conducive to Union (*‘seated’*) spontaneously cleanses the mind of negative thoughts (*‘clean place’*), frees the mind from dualities (*‘neither too high nor too low’*), and insulates from negative grounding energy (*‘kusha grass’*), while promoting comfort and the upward flow of positive spiritual energy (*‘deerskin and cloth’*).

In the following verse, the focus shifts to the attention of lower self, underscoring the nature of one-pointed mind directed by the intellect back to higher Self.

6.12. *Seated there, the mind one-pointed, activity of mind and senses subdued, practicing Yoga [union of self naturally returning to Self] for self-purification.*

Attention: Self-sufficient and separate from action (*‘seated there’*), self referring to Self (*‘the mind one pointed’*), *‘mind and senses* [of lower self] *subdued’* by calmness of Self, Self befriends and purifies self with its calmness (*‘self-purification,’* purifying the nervous system of fear and anger, elements opposed to evolution).

A one-pointed mind, subdues mental and sensory activities in the practice of self-purification, leading seamlessly to the following verse where lack of distraction signifies awareness and steadied attention on the transcendent Self.

6.13. *The body, head and neck upright and still, his gaze directed to the front of his nose, and not looking in any direction,*

Self-awareness: Spiritual energy flowing upward without obstacles (*'the body, head and neck upright and still'*), Self-directed attention looking forward to the limits of self without expectation (*'his gaze directed to the front of his nose'*), awareness naturally steadied by the calm nature of Self (*'not looking in any direction'*).

This verse describes self-awareness with spiritual energy flowing upward unimpeded, self-directed attention limited to a naturally steadied awareness. The following verse depicts submission with a calmed mind aligned with the higher Self, contentment and balance, self-sufficient, and attention focused on the transcendent Self.

6.14. *With quieted mind, casting out fear, established in the vow of chastity, the mind and thoughts fixed on Me, sitting realizing Me as the Transcendent.*

Submission: Mind calmed (*'with quieted mind [of self]'*) befriended by higher Self, contented and balanced (*'casting out fear'*), Self-sufficient (*'established in the vow of chastity'*), attention on the transcendent Self (*'thoughts fixed on Me, sitting realizing Me as the Transcendent'*).

In this verse, the Yogi attains a quieted mind, overcomes fear, embraces self-sufficiency and focuses on the Transcendent Self, symbolizing submission and inner alignment with the higher Self. The following verse builds on this by emphasizing the continuous discipline required to subdue the lower self, leading to peace and supreme liberation in God Consciousness, where the Yogi abides in a state of calm detachment from action.

6.15. *Thus, continually disciplining himself, the Yogi whose mind is subdued goes to peace, goes to the supreme liberation abiding in Me.*

Liberation: Self-referral calming wavering lower self (*'continually disciplining himself'*), *the Yogi whose mind [of lower self] is subdued* in the *'peace'* of Brahman Consciousness (*'goes to peace'*), where calmness upholds separation of Self from action (*'goes to the supreme liberation [from action] abiding in Me'*).

Verses 6.11 to 6.15 describe the practice of spontaneous meditation: Self-discipline and Self-referral for a Yogi. Yogis spontaneously calm their mind, overcomes fears, remains self-sufficient, and focused on the divine. This continual discipline and internal focus lead to a mind subdued by calm higher Self, resulting in peace and supreme liberation, where the Yogi naturally abides in a state of Self-referral and union with the divine, building a bridge to God Consciousness.

Moderation:

Moderation holds the key to a balanced and harmonious life. Krishna emphasizes the importance of moderate behavior in maintaining both physical and mental equilibrium, crucial for achieving Self-referral and spiritual liberation.

Krishna's counsel against excesses in eating, sleeping, and wakefulness highlights a fundamental principle: balance is essential for sustaining a calm and clear mind. Overindulgence or severe restraint in these basic activities dulls the mind and disrupts the spontaneity of Self-referral. A mind burdened by extremes cannot foster the tranquility needed for spiritual growth. Instead, it becomes ensnared in the cycles of desire and dissatisfaction, hindering the union of the lower self with the higher Self.

Yoga, the union of self with Self, thrives on moderation. Krishna asserts that only through a balanced approach to life's activities can we destroy all sorrows. This balance extends beyond mere physical practices to encompass all actions, including food, recreation and rest. A life of moderation preserves the nervous system's natural balance, enabling the mind to remain within the calming influence of the higher Self.

Responding to loss often brings sorrow, a state Krishna addresses by highlighting the loss of friendship between Self and self. Even in the face of such loss, Self-referral reestablishes this friendship, provided we maintain moderation. This approach not only alleviates sorrow but also fosters spiritual evolution towards God consciousness. By remaining moderate, we allow the higher Self to guide the lower self, leading to a life marked by inner peace and spiritual contentment.

Krishna's teachings on moderation resonate with timeless wisdom, advocating for a lifestyle that avoids extremes. By embracing moderation, we align our actions with the natural rhythm of life, fostering a steady mind and a tranquil heart. This balanced state of being nurtures the yogic lamp, ensuring it remains steady, symbolizing a mind free from cravings and attachments.

Ultimately, moderation in all aspects of life serves as a cornerstone for achieving spiritual liberation. It allows us to maintain a steady and tranquil state, essential for deep absorption in the Self: Self-referral. Through this balanced approach, we preserve the delicate connection between the lower self and the higher Self, eradicating sorrows and advancing on the path to enlightenment.

6.16. *Yoga is not for him who eats too much or eats nothing at all. It is not for him who sleeps too much or for him who keeps awake.*

This verse and the following verse address the importance of moderate behavior to maintain balance in body and mind necessary for sustaining Self-referral and achieving liberation (previous five verses).

Excess in eating (or fasting) and excess in sleeping (or maintaining wakefulness) dull the mind and the spontaneity of Self-referral. Excessive behavior of self puts a strain on higher Self's faculty to befriend and reign it in with calmness (6.05).

Krishna warns against excesses in eating, sleeping, and wakefulness, as they hinder Self-referral. Transitioning to the following verse, He emphasizes moderation in all actions, highlighting its role in maintaining balance of Yoga. Excessive behavior disrupts the union of Self and self, while moderation preserves the connection, eradicating sorrows and advancing spiritual evolution.

6.17. *For him moderate in food and recreation, moderate in all actions, and moderate in sleeping and waking, Yoga destroys all sorrows.*

Avoid excesses in daily life which unbalance the body and mind, undermining the Self and self acting as one. Moderation maintains a nervous system capable of supporting the natural balance of Self-referral (6.10; 6.24 – 6.28). In moderation, the self remains within the range of Self's friendship and calming influence.

We respond to loss with sorrow. Krishna uses '*sorrows*' here to underscore the loss of friendship between Self and self. Even with a painful loss in friendship, Self-referral automatically kicks in, reestablishing the friendship between Self and self, and furthering evolution to God consciousness, given we remain moderate in actions.

Krishna emphasizes moderation in actions for balance. This balance is crucial for a Yogi's absorption in the Self (following verse), where a tranquil mind, devoid of cravings, signifies true union. The moderate lifestyle maintains a steady state for the yogic lamp, ensuring steadiness in Self-referral and contentment in the Self (6.19-6.20).

Yoga — Union as a practice:

Overview:

The journey toward unity with the Self unveils a path to profound inner peace and liberation. The *Bhagavad Gita* provides a roadmap for this journey,

offering insights into the practice of Karma Yoga and the attainment of Self-realization. The teachings presented here delve into the transformative power of selfless action and the tranquil state of being that arises from union with the higher Self.

When the mind absorbs into the Self, it finds an anchor in stillness. Free from the cravings for pleasure, the seeker experiences a state of unity, where the mind of lower self, no longer tethered to external objects, finds peace within the calmness of Self. This state of union, as Krishna defines it, marks transcendence from the habit of craving pleasures, leading to an unwavering calmness. The seeker's mind of self in union with Self, absorbed in the Self, remains steady, much like a lamp in a windless place that does not flicker.

In this serene state, thoughts find rest, and the seeker beholds the Self by the Self alone, finding contentment within ever-calm Self. The practice of Yoga, thus, becomes an inward journey where the intellect of lower self in union with higher Self grasps the lasting happiness that lies beyond the senses. Established in this truth, the seeker remains unmoved even by profound sorrow, seeing the supreme gain in the union with the Self.

Krishna emphasizes that this disconnection from sorrow is the essence of Yoga. By abandoning desires rooted in personal incentives and Self-controlling the senses, the seeker achieves a state of undisturbed mind and unwavering practice of union. The intellect, now aligned with the higher Self, no longer deviates from the path of truth and inner contentment.

The state of lasting happiness, as described in the *Gita*, lies beyond the reach of sensory experience. It is grasped by the intellect of lower self identified with Self and realized in the calm seclusion of Self. This happiness is Self-sufficient, and once attained, the seeker cannot imagine any other gain as higher. Established in this state, even profound sorrow fails to disturb the seeker's inner peace.

The journey toward this state involves the Self-disciplined practice of Yoga, where the mind and senses of lower self are Self-controlled, and desires are transcended. This disconnection from the binding effects of action, known as Karma Yoga, fosters inner peace and liberates the seeker from the cycle of impression-desire-action.

The *Gita* teaches that the Vedas, concerned with the realm of the three Gunas of Nature, guide actions on the material plane. However, Krishna urges Arjuna to transcend these Gunas and establish himself in the purity of the higher Self. By practicing Karma Yoga — union achieved via Self-referral

(6.10) — the seeker transcends the dualities of life, the dualities of lower self and higher Self, achieving a state of inner contentment and liberation.

In conclusion, this practice of Yoga — the practice of union; practice of Self-referral (6.10) — as outlined here is a transformative journey of Self-realization and inner peace. By absorbing the mind in the Self and practicing selfless action directed by intellect identified with higher Self, the seeker transcends the cravings for pleasure and the outer dualities of life. Established in the calm seclusion of the higher Self, the Yogi attains lasting happiness and liberation, embodying the true essence of Yoga.

6.18. When his mind is absorbed in the Self, established, and when he is free from craving pleasure, then he is said to be united.

'*Absorbed in the Self*,' the mind of lower self settles into calmness of Self — aided by intellect identified with Self (6.10). The mind becomes '*established*' in the calmness of Self. Mind in union with fulfilling calmness of Self overtakes the habit of craving pleasures.

Krishna defines union as the mind absorbed in Self, free from craving pleasure. Transitioning to the following verse, He compares the seeker's unwavering tranquility to a lamp undisturbed by wind, emphasizing the calmness achieved through Yoga (union). This serenity deepens in the following verses, as thought comes to rest, and the seeker beholds the Self alone, finding contentment within.

6.19. As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, to such compare the Yogi of subdued thought practicing Yoga with the Self alone.

Practicing '*Yoga with Self alone*' means the spontaneous meditation of Self-referral (6.10; 6.24 – 6.28).

When the mind becomes '*absorbed*' in the Self's calmness (previous verse), the overriding experience of calmness subdues the need for thoughts extraneous to furthering evolution, '*as a lamp in a windless place does not flicker*.'

This verse illustrates the serene Yogi, akin to a steady lamp. Connected to the following verse, when thoughts find rest through Yogic practice, the Yogi beholds the Self, content in its solitude. This marks a profound state of self-contentment through calm union with the Self.

6.20. When thought comes to rest, settled through the practice of Yoga, beholding the Self by the Self alone, he is content in the Self.

In the previous verse the mind was absorbed in the Self alone. Here the Self beholds *'the Self by the Self alone.'*

'When thought comes to rest' deepens the experience of *'subdued thought'* (previous verse). Self-referral is *'the practice of Yoga,'* where the calm Self remains in the calm seclusion of Self alone (6.10; 6.24 – 6.28): *'beholding the Self by the Self alone.'* *'Alone'* underscores the Self-sufficiency of Self-referral. Self-sufficient, *'he is content in the Self.'*

When thoughts — of a mind *'absorbed'* in the Self (6.18) — come to rest through Yoga, the Yogi beholds the Self alone, content in the solitude of Self. In the following verse, beyond the senses, the Yogi knows lasting happiness, *'grasped'* by the intellect, unmoved by sorrow. The following verses emphasizes this gain as supreme, unsurpassable. Through Self-disciplined Yoga, the Yogi attains lasting happiness, untouched by sorrow.

6.21. *He knows lasting happiness, lying beyond the senses and grasped by the intellect, and established there, does not deviate from the Truth.*

'Grasped' by the intellect supersedes *'mind absorbed in the Self'* (6.18).

The mind experiences limited happiness in the objective world of the senses. *'Lasting happiness'* lies beyond that experienced through the senses. The intellect discerns what is real and true. When the ego, the subtlest quality of intellect (2.39), identifies with Self perpetually beholding the Self (6.10, previous verse), *'lasting happiness'* of Self is *'grasped'* by the mind. *'Grasped'* signifies the mind holding on and not letting go of *'lasting happiness.'* Having grasped the lasting happiness of this Truth, the mind, surrendered to the Self by the intellect, does not deviate from this *'Truth.'*

6.22. *Having gained this, he cannot imagine any other gain as higher. Established in this, he is unmoved, even by profound sorrow.*

'Having gained [the Truth of] this' lasting happiness and remaining aligned with it (previous verse), *'he cannot imagine any other gain as higher.'* Krishna declares that happiness is top drawer. We have reached an endpoint, or in fact, a turning point, as we shall see in verse 6.32.

Previously *'Yoga destroys all sorrow'* (6.17) under moderate actions and calmness of higher Self's friendship with lower self (6.05). Hence, sorrow was an entity dealt with by calmness. *'Lasting happiness'* supersedes calmness. *'Established in this [lasting happiness], he is unmoved, even by profound sorrow.'* That is, even with the loss of friendship with lower self, the higher Self remains Self-sufficient.

The Yogi, established in lasting happiness, remains unmoved by profound sorrow. This transition to the following verse introduces Yoga as the disconnection from sorrow, urging its practice with a steadfast mind. Abandoning desires rooted in personal incentives and controlling the senses, the Yogi attains this disconnection through undaunted, doubt-free Yoga.

6.23. Let this disconnection with sorrow be known as Yoga; this Yoga is to be practiced without doubt and an undismayed mind.

'Let this disconnection with sorrow be known as Yoga [union achieved through Self-referral].' When the intellect unites with Self, it achieves Yoga and the mind grasps *'lasting happiness'* (previous two verses). Self disconnects from sorrow.

The following five verses illustrate how *'this Yoga* [union of mind with Self achieved through Self-referral, which is the “practice” of union] *is to be practiced without doubt and an undismayed mind.'* That is, Self-referral on autopilot should neither be doubted nor experienced with alarm.

Disconnection from sorrow is declared as Yoga (union), practiced with an undismayed mind. The following verse instructs the Yogi to abandon desires rooted in personal incentives, controlling the senses through the mind. Self-referral, the spontaneous practice of union, emerges as the means to disengage from surface desires and calm the mind.

The Path to inner peace through Self-referral:

Overview:

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, we discover a profound guide to inner peace and Self-realization through the practice of Yoga, the practice of union, the practice of Self-referral. This sacred text, conveyed through the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, delves into the intricacies of duty, desire, and the nature of the Self. By focusing on the principles of selfless action and Self-referral, the Gita offers timeless wisdom that transcends the material and leads to spiritual enlightenment.

The essence of Self-referral lies in the spontaneous ability to turn the mind inward, away from the incessant desires that arise from personal incentives. As Krishna teaches, the Yogi practices Self-referral by abandoning desires and Self-controlling the senses with the mind of the lower self united with the higher Self. This practice of union — Self-referral — rooted in the calmness of Self, allows the individual to find peace and befriend the self through the deeper awareness of the Self. The surface of the mind often wavers with

desires, but through Self-referral and naturally detaching from incentives, one achieves a state of inner tranquility. This process is not about forcefully suppressing desires but about recognizing their transient nature and letting go of them naturally.

Achieving inner calmness is a gradual process, Krishna advises. Through a firmly grasped intellect, the mind of the lower self gradually comes to rest in the Self, free from external thoughts. This gradual approach underscores the importance of patience and persistence in spiritual practice. The intellect of the lower self, in union with the Self, decides the true course of action that furthers evolution. By allowing the mind to abide in the Self, one experiences a profound sense of peace and detachment from worldly distractions.

The mind, by nature, is fickle and often wavers to and fro. Krishna's guidance emphasizes the active role of the Yogi in allowing the mind of the lower self back in union with the higher Self and allowing the Self to befriend the self. Allowing the mind of the lower self back to the Self, whenever it wavers, is crucial in maintaining inner discipline and achieving lasting peace.

A peaceful mind, free from desires and evil thoughts, becomes one with Brahman and attains supreme happiness. This state of happiness exists independent of external circumstances and arises from within, as the Yogi aligns with the unchanging reality of Brahman. By letting go of surface-level desires and embracing the calmness of the Self, the Yogi experiences an enduring sense of happiness and contentment.

Through the practice of Yoga, the Yogi transcends evil actions and easily contacts Brahman, attaining lasting happiness. This practice involves the spontaneous renunciation of personal desires, leading to a state of inner peace and liberation. The connection with Brahman signifies a profound unity with the divine, where the Yogi sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self.

Liberation from the cycle of desires and actions is achieved through the consistent practice of Self-referral. In Brahman Consciousness, the Yogi experiences a complete separation from action at its source, driven by Nature's purpose to further evolution. This state of happiness persists as the Yogi aligns with the higher Self and recognizes the unity of all creation.

Self-referral is the spontaneous practice of union. The surface of the mind wavers with desires whose origins lie in one's incentives. Separated from incentive and desire in Brahman Consciousness, Nature activates Self-referral. In becoming aware of the drift away from calmness on the surface of

the mind, Nature's purpose to further evolution kicks Self-referral into gear, returning the self to the calmness of the Self and abandoning those surface desires. No effort is forfeited, and no obstacle to completion exists in controlling the multitude of senses with the mind of the lower self befriended by the higher Self.

The Yogi who has achieved Brahman Consciousness practices Self-referral — the subtlest practice of Karma Yoga — abandoning desires rooted in personal incentives and controlling the senses with the tranquil mind. Gradually, he should come to rest through the intellect firmly grasped; his mind established in the Self, he should not think of anything. This gradual approach to rest through the intellect firmly grasped emphasizes the ease of coming to rest. The intellect decides the real and true course of action to further evolution. Nature informs refined qualities of intellect established in Self to return to the calmness of Self. His mind thus befriended by the Self, he should not think of anything and go with the underlying flow of Nature.

Whenever the fickle mind wavers to and fro, the Yogi should bring it back under the sway of the Self alone. On becoming aware of thoughts witnessed on the surface of the mind wavering to and fro, he should go with the flow. Let Nature shift attention back to the calmness of the Self. "Let" underscores leaving desire and action to Nature to disengage the mind from wavering to and fro, seemingly returning the Self to the calmness of the Self of its own accord.

The Yogi whose mind is peaceful, in whom incentives are calmed, whose mind is free from evil, and has become one with Brahman, attains supreme happiness. The mind becomes peaceful by letting go of thoughts on its surface level and letting the calmness of Self befriend the self, where incentives are calmed by the referral of the self back to the Self and infusing the self with calmness. Nature decides which thoughts support evolution and are worthy of pursuit, or not. Thus, we free ourselves from evil thoughts that retard evolution by spontaneously turning control over to Nature and allowing the calmness of Self to befriend the self.

In the supreme peace of Brahman Consciousness, we attain supreme happiness. Practicing this Yoga, the Yogi, freed from evil actions, easily contacts Brahman, attaining lasting happiness. Practicing this Yoga means the subtlest practice of Karma Yoga, where action is the intellect identifying with the Self and union is the higher Self befriending the lower self. Freed from evil thoughts and freed from evil actions evil thoughts engender, in Brahman Consciousness we easily contact Brahman, the Oneness

underlying all action. That is, in peace we attain Brahman's complete separation from action at its source. Fueled by Nature's never-ending purpose to direct desires and actions towards furthering evolution, supreme happiness in Brahman Consciousness persists.

In conclusion, the *Bhagavad Gita* offers a timeless guide to achieving inner peace and spiritual fulfillment through the principle of Self-referral, where the intellect of the self naturally identifies with the higher Self. By allowing the mind to turn inward and aligning with the Self, one transcends the transient nature of desires and attains a state of supreme happiness and liberation. This journey requires patience, persistence, and a deep commitment to the practice of Yoga — the practice of union, the practice of Self-referral — ultimately leading to a profound unity with the divine.

6.24. *Abandoning those desires whose origins lie in one's incentives, controlling the multitude of senses with the mind.*

Re mind-body (6.11):

Self-referral is the spontaneous practice of union (6.10). The surface of the mind wavers with *'those desires whose origins lie in one's incentives.'* Separated from incentive and desire in Brahman Consciousness, Nature activates Self-referral. In becoming aware of the drift away from calmness on the surface of the mind, Nature's purpose to further evolution kicks Self-referral into gear, returning self to calmness of Self and *'Abandoning those [surface] desires.'* *'No effort is forfeited and no obstacle to completion exists'* (2.40) in *'controlling the multitude of senses with the mind'* of lower self befriended by higher Self with *'this Yoga [which] is to be practiced without doubt and an undismayed mind'* (previous verse). Deep within the mind Nature acts with resolute purpose.

The Yogi who has achieved Brahman Consciousness practices Self-referral — the subtlest practice of Karma Yoga (6.10) — abandoning desires rooted in personal incentives and controlling senses with the tranquil mind. The following guides the Yogi to gradually find rest through a firmly grasped intellect, letting the mind abide in the Self without dwelling on external thoughts, fostering inner calmness.

6.25. *Gradually he should come to rest through the intellect firmly grasped; his mind established in the Self, he should not think of anything.*

Re attention (6.12):

This verse drills down into the process revealed in the previous verse.

'Gradually he should come to rest through the intellect firmly grasped.'
'Gradually' emphasizes the ease of coming 'to rest.' The intellect decides the real and true course of action to further evolution. Nature informs refined qualities of intellect established in Self to return to calmness of Self (previous verse). His mind thus befriended by Self (6.05) *'he should not think of anything'* and go with the underlying flow of Nature.

This verse elaborates on the process of coming to rest through the firmly grasped intellect, establishing the mind in the Self. In the following verse, Krishna advises bringing the wavering mind back under the sway of the Self when it falters, emphasizing the Yogi's active role in Self-discipline.

6.26. *Whenever the fickle mind wavers to and fro, let him bring it back under the sway of the Self alone.*

Re Self-awareness (6.13):

'Him' is the dweller in the body (3.40), the individualized nature of the Self.

On becoming aware of thoughts witnessed on the surface of the mind wavering to and fro, go with the flow (previous verse). Let Nature shift attention back to calmness of Self: *'let him bring it back under the sway of the Self alone.'* 'Let' underscores leaving desire and action to Nature to disengage the mind from wavering to and fro, seemingly returning Self to calmness of Self of its own accord.

This verse advises the Yogi to bring the wavering mind back under the sway of the Self alone. In the following verse, the peaceful Yogi, free from evil thoughts, attains supreme happiness. By letting go of surface-level desires and allowing Self-referral, the Yogi achieves peace.

6.27. *The Yogi whose mind is peaceful, in whom incentives are calmed, whose mind is free from evil, and has become one with Brahman, attains supreme happiness.*

Re submission (6.14):

The *'mind is peaceful'* by letting go of thoughts on its surface level (previous verse) and letting calmness of Self befriend self (6.05), where incentives are calmed by referral of self back to Self and infusing self with calmness (6.24). Nature decides which thoughts support evolution and are worthy of pursuit, or not. Thus, we free ourselves from evil thoughts that retard evolution by

spontaneously turning control over to Nature and allowing calmness of Self to befriend self (6.05).

In the supreme peace of Brahman Consciousness, we attain '*supreme happiness*.' Having attained Brahman Consciousness (5.24) and supreme peace of mind in separation from activity (5.29), we achieve '*supreme happiness*.' From verse 2.66, '*For one lacking peace of mind, can there be happiness?*'

Here, the peaceful Yogi, free from evil thoughts, attains supreme happiness. The following verse highlights that practicing this Yoga (6.10), the Yogi, freed from evil actions, easily contacts Brahman, achieving lasting happiness. The connection between peace, freedom from evil and contact with Brahman underscores the transformative power of Yoga in one's life.

6.28. Practicing this Yoga, the Yogi, freed from evil actions, easily attains contact with Brahman and attains lasting happiness.

Re liberation (6.15):

'*Practicing this Yoga*' means the subtlest practice of Karma Yoga (6.10): where action (Karma) is the intellect identifying with the Self and union (Yoga) is the higher Self befriending the lower self.

Freed from evil thoughts (previous verse), freed from '*evil actions*' evil thoughts engender. In Brahman Consciousness (5.24) we easily contact Brahman, the Oneness underlying all action. That is, in peace (previous verse) we attain Brahman's complete separation from action at its source. Fueled by Nature's never-ending purpose to direct desires and actions towards furthering evolution (6.24), '*supreme happiness*' in Brahman Consciousness (previous verse) persist.

Practicing Yoga, the Yogi, freed from evil actions, easily contacts Brahman, attaining lasting happiness. Transitioning to the following verse, established in union, the Yogi sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. A profound unity is achieved, where God's omnipresence is seen and honored.

God Consciousness:

Overview:

Established in Yoga, we see the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. This vision transcends the ordinary, merging the perishable with the imperishable. As we attain Brahman Consciousness, we see Brahman's Oneness in everything, recognizing the simultaneous permanence of

transcendent Reality and the fleeting nature of our ever-changing world. Through this, we see the Self in all and all within the Self.

He who sees Me everywhere and sees all things in Me never loses sight of Me, nor do I lose sight of him. In God Consciousness, we see God in all creation. This vision holds the permanence of God against the backdrop of reality's impermanence. We see God everywhere and everything within Him. In revealing Himself, God assures that those who see Him are never lost to Him.

In union with Me, the Yogi who honors Me, abiding in all beings, remains in Me, regardless of his actions. This honor manifests in earthly acts, not as an image of a distant, stern deity but as a presence felt in our hearts, honored with spontaneous gratitude and love. Established in this union, a seeker's actions align with divine purpose, achieving God's intent through every act.

Liberation in God Consciousness is active, not passive. Through 'even vision,' we achieve this consciousness, transcending the ego's constructs of "experiencer," "process of experiencing" and "that experienced," which Vishnu, the Sustainer, sustains. Distinctions dissolve as we see Brahman's Oneness in everything and God evenly everywhere. This even vision deepens our knowledge, shifting from seeing Oneness in objects to seeing God in all creation.

In essence, God Consciousness invites us to see the divine in every aspect of life, achieving liberation through active engagement with the world, guided by an even vision of God everywhere.

6.29. Established in Yoga, with even vision he sees the Self in all beings and sees all beings present in the Self.

In Brahman Consciousness we see Brahman's Oneness in everything (4.18). Simultaneously, we see the underlying permanence of transcendent Reality and impermanence of ever-changing reality. Simultaneously, we see the Self in all beings and all beings present in the Self.

6.30. He who sees Me everywhere and sees all things in Me, I am not lost to him and he is not lost to Me.

In God Consciousness we see God everywhere. Simultaneously we see the underlying permanence of God everywhere and the impermanence of reality in God. We see God everywhere and see all things in God. In revealing Himself, God is not lost to him who has gained God Consciousness. Similarly, in actually seeing God, he is not lost to Me.

6.31. Established in Union with Me, he who honors Me abiding in all beings, in whatever way he acts, that Yogi abides in Me.

Abiding in Me brings ‘honors’ down to earth. Abiding in all beings we see God, not as a bearded, stern and robed Father figure enthroned on puffy clouds, reaching out to touch Adam with His power and glory. Rather, seeing gets real and through your heart you honor Him with spontaneous gratitude and love. Established in the union of His permanence and impermanence of love, you are a Yogi abiding in God. Union with God informs action to achieve His purpose.

6.32. *Seeing everything with an even vision in the image of the Self, Arjuna, be it pleasure or pain, he is thought to be the Supreme Yogi.*

Abiding in Me brings ‘honors’ down to earth. Abiding in all beings we see God, not as a bearded, stern and robed Father figure enthroned on puffy clouds, reaching out to touch Adam with His power and glory. Rather, seeing gets real and through your heart you honor him with spontaneous gratitude and love. Established in the union of His permanence and impermanence of love, you are a Yogi abiding in God. Union with God informs action to achieve His purpose.

“God met me more than halfway. He freed me from my anxious fears.” *Psalm* 34:4. Liberation in God Consciousness is active, not passive. In fact, it is participatory. Through ‘*even vision*,’ we achieve God Consciousness. Out of ego, we create the “experiencer,” “process of experiencing” and “that experienced” (7.04) that Vishnu the Sustainer sustains.

Distinctions disappear. Brahman seen in Oneness in every “thing” (5.19 - 5.24) differs from ‘*even vision*’ of seeing God everywhere (this verse; Table 1: States of Consciousness in a Nutshell). We see Oneness of Brahman in objects. Objects as separate and distinctly different objects (See ‘*Maaya*,’ 7.13 – 7.15) evaporate. We see ‘*even vision*’ of God in ‘*the image of the* [most fundamental level of (7.05)] *Self*.’ Where we once saw Oneness in every “thing,” we now see God evenly everywhere.

Seeing evenness of God in all creation deepens knowledge. Previously we defined knowledge as seeing Oneness in all, becoming familiar with all and consequently, knowing all (4.33). Seeing God in all creation, gives purpose to the Oneness we see. Self-referral (6.24 – 6.28) — ‘*calmness is said to be the means*’ (6.03) — has purified the nervous systems to the degree where we experience creation manifesting out of all possibilities (7.04 – 7.12). Knowing God at the action level of His purpose, so to speak, we call God Consciousness. This is the beginning of pure knowledge. Subsequent chapters deepen understanding and experience beyond God’s purpose and reveal deeper meaning to action and to fundamentals of knowledge. So, even as we round the bend in Ch 6, we have yet to reach the nub of knowledge.

Mathew 5:5 ("Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.") helps to summarize levels of consciousness and consequent knowledge addressed so far.

In Transcendental Consciousness, "Liberated are those who sacrifice desire by serving others' desires; for they shall feel at home in the world they were born into"; know freedom from action.

In Cosmic Consciousness, "Contented are those who spontaneously perform right actions; for they shall feel at home in the world they were born into"; know desires and actions go of their own accord.

In Brahman Consciousness, "Peaceful are those who experience calmness separating higher Self from lower self; for they shall feel at home in the world they were born into"; know happiness in all creation.

In God Consciousness, "Joyful are those who see God everywhere; for they shall feel at home in the world they were born into"; know God at the action level of His purpose; know love.

The Supreme Yogi, with an even vision, sees pleasure or pain as equal. Arjuna questions the continuity of such vision (following verse), as the fickle mind wavers. Krishna agrees, stating the mind is difficult to control, but through nonattachment, the wavering mind can be held in check, allowing for sustained equanimity.

Truly, consciousness structures knowledge (*Rik Veda*); 6.32 continued in 6.35.

Discipline and maintenance:

Overview:

Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the profound importance of discipline and maintaining Self-control over the mind. Krishna acknowledges the inherent difficulty in this task, stating, "Without doubt, the mind is wavering and difficult to control, Arjuna, but by practice of nonattachment, it is held." This wisdom emphasizes that the mind, by its very nature, is unstable, turbulent, and powerful, making it as challenging to control as the wind.

Arjuna, expressing his own struggles, reflects on the fickle nature of the mind, describing it as unstable and obstinate. He questions how one can maintain even vision when the mind drags one away from fixed purposes. Krishna's response provides a pathway through the practice of nonattachment, a principle crucial for achieving God Consciousness. By

seeing God everywhere and practicing union through spontaneous Self-referral, one sustains this higher state of consciousness.

The entropic nature of the universe disrupts the thin vision of happiness we create in our experiences, making it essential to practice nonattachment — practice union, practice Self-referral, practice the subtlest Karma Yoga. Krishna assures that this practice helps hold the mind in lasting happiness. He emphasizes that happiness, when sustained by gratitude and Vishnu's influence, cradles the busy mind even amidst the chaos of daily life.

Krishna also underscores the necessity of discipline in Yoga, acknowledging its difficulty for the undisciplined but attainable through proper means and persistent effort. This disciplined practice requires seeing God everywhere and embracing the natural state of nonattachment. By sacrificing attachment, one maintains a steady mind and right actions, ultimately achieving a harmonious balance and inner peace.

In essence, Krishna's teachings guide us towards understanding that the mind, though naturally wavering, can be Self-controlled through disciplined practice of nonattachment and seeing the divine in all aspects of life. This approach not only brings about inner peace but also aligns our actions with the cosmic order, leading to spiritual growth and fulfillment. Through persistent and disciplined practice, one transcends the turbulence of the mind and achieve a state of enduring happiness and divine harmony.

From verse 3.39, *'This insatiable flame of desire veils wisdom and is the eternal enemy of the wise.'*

6.33. Arjuna: *This Yoga declared by You as evenness of mind, O Krishna, because of wavering I do not see its continuance.*

If the nature of the fickle mind is to waver, as Krishna stated (6.26), how is it possible for even vision to endure?

6.34. Arjuna continues: *For the mind, indeed, is unstable, turbulent, powerful, and obstinate; I consider it as difficult to control as the wind.*

How possible even vision (6.32) when the mind drags Arjuna here and there beyond his fixity of purpose? Let the mind '*control*' the mind through spontaneous Self-referral (following two verses).

6.35. Krishna: *Without doubt, the mind is wavering and difficult to control, Arjuna, but by practice of nonattachment, it is held.*

Seeing God everywhere fear and anger depart (continued in 7.14).

Krishna agrees, '*the [surface level of the] mind is wavering and difficult to control.*' For such is the mind's independent nature in strategizing survival and increase in the entropy of daily life. Indeed, '*wavering and difficult to control*' is a fact of the mind's independently functioning nature in the relative field of life. It's a good thing, as long as you're not hijacked by it.

The entropic universe we live in easily disrupts the thin vision of joy we create in our tripartite experience of creation (3.05, 7.04). '*But by practice of nonattachment, it [the mind] is held.*' By this Krishna means the practice of union, spontaneous Self-referral (6.24 – 6.28) to seeing God everywhere. You do not have to drift off with wavering thoughts witnessed on the surface of mind. Having achieved Brahman Consciousness and complete separation of Self from action *via* calmness (5.29; 6.03), we are no longer obliged to feed the beast. '*Practice of nonattachment,*' naturally returning to seeing God everywhere, is necessary to sustain God Consciousness, at least at this stage.

By practice of nonattachment, the mind is '*held*' in '*lasting happiness*' of God Consciousness. Nature no longer decides on Self-referral (6.24); it does not have to. '*Held*' means sustained. Happiness sustains happiness; but it is a very delicate matter, fueled by gratitude and requiring Vishnu's participation as well. Sustained by Vishnu (aka Krishna, 6.32), happiness resides in the heart's influence on senses, feeling, thoughts, and even of vision. Even in the helter-skelter dynamics of everyday life, happiness cradles the busy mind in the warm glow of happiness.

Krishna acknowledges the mind's wavering nature but asserts that through the practice of nonattachment through Self-referral, it can be held. In the following verse, He emphasizes the difficulty of Yoga for the undisciplined but assures that diligent effort leads to success, urging Arjuna to embrace disciplined endeavors for spiritual growth.

6.36. *I agree Yoga is difficult to attain for him who is undisciplined; but it can be gained through proper means by him who endeavors.*

"I think you should bear in mind that entropy is not on your side," Elon Musk.

Loss of friendship between Self and self is entropic (6.05). Defeat entropy by living in the present. Gratitude ('*he who honors Me abiding in all beings,*'

6.31) exists only in the present. Simply be grateful for seeing God everywhere. Stop entropy in its tracks. More so, feel His increase.

Persistence is a law of Nature: those who persist, persist; those who don't, don't. Krishna acknowledges, 'Yoga' (Union) in God Consciousness and seeing God everywhere requires discipline. But God Consciousness can be gained through the proper means of seeing God everywhere through the practice of nonattachment (previous verse). That is, we sacrifice attachment to nonattachment in the practice of Self-referral, the subtlest practice of Karma Yoga (6.10). 'Endeavors' means to practice 'Yoga' (union); practicing union ("Yoga — Union as a practice": 6.18 – 6.23) in partnership with Vishnu is not for the lazy, dull, indulgent, or indifferent. Meet Vishnu halfway or He'll drop you like a hot potato. Gaining and sustaining God Consciousness and seeing the universal fabric of joy everywhere requires discipline.

Krishna acknowledges the difficulty of Yoga for the undisciplined but emphasizes its attainability through proper means and endeavor. Arjuna, expressing doubt in the following verse, questions the sustainability of even-mindedness due to the fickle nature of the mind.

Path taken:

Overview:

Arjuna stands on the battlefield, his mind a whirlwind of doubts and fears. He faces a profound moral and spiritual crisis, questioning the very essence of duty and righteousness. In this moment of turmoil, he turns to Krishna, seeking clarity and guidance. Arjuna's query reflects a universal human dilemma: what becomes of one who, despite having faith, falters on the path to spiritual perfection? He fears that such a person might be lost, like a broken cloud, falling from both worldly and spiritual achievements.

Krishna, with His infinite wisdom, addresses Arjuna's concerns with compassion and insight. He assures Arjuna that no righteous action is ever wasted. Whether on earth or in the celestial realms, the efforts of those who act uprightly are never in vain. Krishna emphasizes that even a taste of liberation leaves a lasting impact, guiding the soul towards continued spiritual progress. He urges Arjuna to understand that true misfortune lies not in failing to achieve perfection but in abandoning the pursuit altogether.

Krishna further explains that those who fall from the path of Yoga do not perish but are born into environments conducive to spiritual growth. They may be reborn into families of the wise and illustrious, where they can resume their journey towards perfection. This continuity of progress

underscores the resilience of the soul and the enduring nature of righteous actions.

The conversation then pivots to the importance of perseverance. Krishna highlights that even the fallen Yogi, carried by the momentum of past practices, rises above those who merely perform rituals without deeper understanding. The strength of righteous action propels the soul forward, ensuring that even in the absence of conscious effort, evolution towards the divine continues.

Krishna's teachings culminate in the assurance that the persevering Yogi, purified through many births, ultimately attains the transcendent goal. This journey requires the Yogi to act with determination, purifying the self through sustained effort and nonattachment. Krishna emphasizes that this path is superior to asceticism, scholarly pursuits and ritualistic practices, as it involves integrating spiritual wisdom into daily actions.

Krishna's counsel to Arjuna is clear: act with faith and devotion, honoring the divine within and merging the individual self with the universal Self. Through steadfast action and devotion, one attains unity with the divine, achieving a state of God Consciousness where the soul is fully liberated and at peace.

In essence, Krishna's message is a call to dynamic action, urging Arjuna to rise above doubts and fears. By embracing the path of Karma Yoga, performing selfless actions — serving others' desires and therefore, innocently renouncing one's own — the seeker aligns with the cosmic order and experiences profound inner peace and fulfillment. This approach transforms the battlefield of life into an arena for spiritual growth, where every action, guided by divine wisdom, leads towards ultimate liberation.

6.37. Arjuna asks: *One who is undisciplined, though possessed of faith, whose mind has fallen from Yoga and does not achieve perfection, what does he gain?*

Battle focuses the mind on killing and survival. Will Arjuna stray from the path by taking attention off Krishna and the practice of nonattachment in Self-referral? What if he dies on the field of battle before liberation? Has he been disciplined and endeavored enough?

6.38. Arjuna continues: *Does he not perish like a broken cloud, without foothold and fallen from both worlds, deluded on the path of Brahman?*

Physically destroyed in the battle of life, is his spiritual progress also destroyed? *'Fallen from both worlds'* of heaven and earth, does he lose footing gained?

6.39. Arjuna continues: *You are able, Krishna, to completely dispel my doubts; none but you can dispel my uncertainty.*

Arjuna submits to pure knowledge.

Hope springs eternal. Krishna has dispelled doubts before.

6.40. Krishna responds: *Neither here on earth nor in heaven above is there destruction for him who acts uprightly. No one who does good goes the way of misfortune.*

Krishna immediately returns to the theme of practicing Karma Yoga and performing right action (2.45 – 2.47). With even a taste of liberation, Arjuna will realize its depth and continuity. Fight and he will not be destroyed like a broken cloud and go the way of misfortune.

6.41. *Attaining the worlds of the meritorious and having dwelt there for countless years, he who has fallen from Yoga is born into the dwelling of the radiant and illustrious.*

Krishna delivers the action component of his answer by reminding Arjuna of his *'illustrious'* birth and status. To continue along his trajectory *'of the radiant and illustrious'* he must act *'uprightly'* (previous verse) but act he must! In inaction, Arjuna will fall into disgrace.

6.42. *Or he may be born into a family of wise Yogis, though such a birth is more difficult to attain in the world.*

In acting *'uprightly'* (6.40) Arjuna has a shot at achieving a less martial path, one disengaged from *'this terrible deed of war'* (3.01).

6.43. *There he regains the knowledge from his former body and by virtue of this, strives toward perfection.*

'Strives' shows *'practice of nonattachment'* (6.35) and endeavor (6.36) are always required.

Possessed of knowledge, the family of wise Yogis (previous verse) will impart that knowledge — that level of purity and consciousness attained — lost to the nervous system upon death. The wise Yogis will identify the goal and means to it. Arjuna will again '*strive toward perfection*' of incorporating Brahman into all actions (3.15, 3.20). '*Strive*' implies taking dynamic action, especially now. Here — and only here — on the field of battle opportunity knocks.

6.44. *He is irresistibly carried on, even against his will, by prior practice. Even the aspirant to Yoga rises above those who merely perform rituals.*

The strength of right action is such that even in the absence of knowing its nature to fuel evolution, evolution is pursued and gained. Righteous action engaged is superior to willful passive actions of '*those who [know the nature of right action but] merely perform [go through the motions of] rituals.*' This includes mood makers who fake right action. Krishna's take-home message: Act!

6.45. *But the persevering Yogi, purified of sins and perfected through many births, reaches the transcendent goal.*

'*The persevering Yogi*' acts through thick and thin in the relative by '*practice of nonattachment*' (6.35) and endeavor (6.36). Purification and perfection carry over into rebirth. Act righteously and you will reach the transcendent goal of God Consciousness. Get your mind off philosophy and theory. Q&A will not carry Arjuna the distance. Act!

6.46. *This Yogi is superior to ascetics, he is superior to the learned, and this Yogi is superior to those performing ritual works. Therefore, be a Yogi.*

Act! Stand up and fight and surpass '*ascetics*' who devote themselves to purification but fail to integrate it into daily life, surpass the '*learned*' who plumb depths of understanding but fail to incorporate it into righteous actions, and even surpass those who curry favor from the gods through '*ritual works.*' Such is the strength of selfless actions in service to others to drive evolution (Ch 2, 3, 4, and 5).

6.47. *Of all these Yogis, he is most fully united who in faith and devotion honors Me, his inner Self merges into Me.*

'*Of all these Yogis, he is most fully united ... who honors*' my teaching of right action through the practice of Karma Yoga (2.45 – 2.47). The solution to resolving doubt, dithering, bondage, and to gaining faith in Me and liberation

in God Consciousness? Act! Stand up! Fight! Achieve Cosmic Consciousness and Brahman Consciousness through action alone. Then, let calmness be the means. Merge into God Consciousness. Honor God by following His teaching: Act!

'*Merges*' speaks to the ongoing process of evolution and segues perfectly into Ch 7.

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 7: Know God* — Wisdom from Realization

Seeing the imperishable Creator in His perishable creation, we transcend the illusion of Maaya.

*Here Krishna reveals His divine nature and cosmic role. He states that He is the origin of all creation and that everything proceeds from Him. This declaration aligns Krishna with the qualities of Vishnu, the Supreme God who creates and sustains our universe. Thus, throughout the commentaries of this chapter, Krishna will be referred to interchangeably as God, or Supreme God, the One who creates and sustains our vast universe, reflecting His divine function as articulated in the *Gita*. By recognizing Krishna's dual role, we gain a deeper understanding of His teachings on the imperishable and perishable nature of His reality and the path to spiritual wisdom Krishna promises to deliver in this chapter.

However, it is important to note that this interpretation of Krishna as the Supreme God is specific to Hindu theology and should not be confused with the concept of the One God depicted in the Old and New Testament of the Bible. In the biblical tradition, God is understood as a singular, all-powerful deity who is distinct from the deities of other religious traditions. By recognizing these theological distinctions, we appreciate the unique perspectives and spiritual teachings that each tradition offers.

God's imperishable and perishable natures, which comprise Maaya, are also fundamental to the existence and diversity of religions. Maaya, as described in the *Bhagavad Gita*, represents the illusory nature of the material world, concealing the true essence of its transcendent divinity. This concept of Maaya underscores how religions emerge as attempts to navigate and understand the complexities of Maaya, each offering unique perspectives on the unseen divine. Here in this chapter, Krishna transcends this illusion by revealing Himself as both the material and transcendent aspects of existence. This experience of seeing God in all His creations challenges conventional religious categorizations rooted in Maaya, highlighting the interconnectedness and universal truths that underpin diverse spiritual paths. And of course, the argument of my God vs. your God could go on and on. It is best to see God everywhere (Ch 6), to transcend Maaya and see God's imperishable nature in all His perishable creation (this chapter), and thus, to transcend religion to its core, which is religion's first promise.

Commentary on Ch 7 verses 1 - 30:

God's promise:

Overview:

In the sacred dialogue of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna's promise reverberates through the ages, guiding seekers toward divine wisdom. Krishna invites us to immerse our minds in Him, practicing union and depending on Him to attain complete knowledge, complete familiarity with all existence. This invitation is not merely to understand but to experience God's omniscient presence, leading us to know Him completely, without doubt.

In God Consciousness, we witness the divine everywhere, including the words of these sacred verses. To know God is to act with His omniscient wisdom, fostering spiritual and material wellbeing. Without His divine increase, entropy would dominate, leading to chaos and suffering. By acting in faith, we align with His principle of increase, reinforcing our trust that His divine order governs the cosmos. This faith in achieving outcomes mirrors our belief in His supreme order, empowering us to act with divine wisdom and further our evolution.

God's darshan, the vision of the divine, is a practice of union. Arjuna exemplifies this by surrendering completely to Krishna's guidance. In response, Krishna fills Arjuna with intimacy, understanding and love, drawing his full attention. This union, achieved through attentive listening and intimate understanding, elevates Arjuna to higher awareness, enabling him to experience God's physical and celestial realms fully.

To know God "completely" is to understand His principles in both physical and celestial realms. By practicing union with Krishna's teachings, we find refuge in Him and eventually realize His Self, transcending physical and celestial limitations. Knowing Krishna's Self through darshan and understanding His words leads us to grasp His divine nature in all realms. This knowledge naturally guides our actions with the principle of increase, culminating in the principle of love in the celestial realm.

God represents increase over entropy and love over all. Krishna urges us to understand and experience His teachings, assuring us that complete knowledge encompasses familiarity with everything in the world of action. This journey is akin to climbing a mountain, where we gradually unveil the path to wisdom.

As Krishna unfolds His teachings, He reveals that striving for perfection is rare. Most people find higher consciousness irrelevant amidst daily life's demands. The delusion of the material world often obscures God's true nature, making the journey toward divine knowledge challenging. However, Krishna's close relationship with Arjuna exemplifies the possibility of overcoming this delusion through devotion and guidance.

Krishna further deepens this relationship by revealing His nature in both the non-transcendent phenomenal world and the transcendent realm. This revelation lays the foundation for understanding Krishna completely, emphasizing the importance of faith in overcoming delusion.

In our journey, as we ascend the mountain of spiritual understanding, we move from the sensory overload of the base to the clarity of higher awareness. This path reveals the wholeness and unity of creation, leading us through layers of experience and belief until we perceive the divine in every aspect of existence. Eventually, we reach a state where understanding and experience fall away, and we live in the eternal present, seeing the imperishable in the perishable.

Krishna's teachings guide us to this realization, where we act with divine wisdom in the world of action. Our faith and devotion lead us to a place where nothing further remains to be known, and we see God smiling down from the summit, His wisdom guiding our every step. In this union with the divine, we find the ultimate knowledge and the light of faith illuminating our path.

7.01. Krishna continues from His revelation of God Consciousness in Ch 6: *With your mind absorbed in Me, practicing Union, dependent on Me you will know Me completely, hear that without doubt.*

As we shall see, in God Consciousness we see God everywhere, to include the words of these verses.

To know God is to act in his omniscient wisdom of increase. God overcomes entropy of the physical realm by creating, protecting and evolving spiritual and material wellbeing. Without God's increase, disorder, chaos and suffering would reign over evolution in wellbeing.

Through our faith in achieving outcomes, we act in His principle of increase. Often unwittingly so: when we act in faith to achieve an outcome, we *de facto* act in faith that His order reigns supreme throughout the cosmos. In the everyday faith of achieving this or that outcome of our daily lives our actions assume His principle of increase, empowering us with His Divine Faith to act in His omniscient wisdom and achieve His outcomes that further evolution. Believing in God greases the skids of faith, enhances the joy of forward

momentum in achieving desires and flourishes the feeling of gratitude that enhances and smooths the journey to greater wellbeing. We know God by doing as he does in the way he does.

In God's darshan we practice union through the Avatar of these verses. Arjuna has fully given himself over to Krishna's guidance. Krishna reciprocates with enthralling feelings of intimacy, understanding and love, rendering Arjuna's full attention on Him. Arjuna's reverence and heightened alertness absorb the full meaning of God's wisdom. Verse by verse, this union of attentive listening and intimate understanding lifts Arjuna to higher levels of awareness necessary to fully Experience God's physical and celestial realms.

To know God "completely" is to know his physical and celestial realms simultaneously. In practicing union with Krishna's darshan and Avatar of words, we take refuge in Him and in time, realize His Self which lies beyond physical and celestial realms. In knowing Krishna's Self through experiencing His darshan and understanding the Avatar of His words, we come to know His Divine Nature in all non-transcendent and transcendent. We unite with Him and know the governing principles of His physical and celestial realms. Knowing it in the physical realm, the principle of increase naturally guides our action to gain His principle of love in the celestial realm. Even in our final act of death, we simultaneously know Him in the celestial realm. Increase and love united through the union practiced in listening without doubt to these verses.

God is increase over entropy; God is love over all. And so are you. As we shall see...

Krishna urges union and understanding of His God Consciousness. The following verse assures that by comprehending and experiencing His words, one gains complete knowledge. The reader's journey, akin to climbing a mountain, unfolds, unveiling the path to wisdom in the world of action through Krishna's teachings.

7.02. To you I shall explain this understanding along with providing the experience of it, which once known, nothing further remains to be known in this world of action.

Krishna lays out His means for fulfilling this promise to know Him completely. Through understanding wed with the experience of it, achieved through darshan and listening to His words, Arjuna will gain the knowledge beyond which nothing further remains to be known in the world. Then, Arjuna will act with Krishna's wisdom in this world of action. All Krishna requires of Arjuna is to hear His words without doubt. That is, sit at Krishna's feet, go with the flow and listen to His message. In beholding Krishna's non-transcendent and transcendent natures through understanding and experience achieved in these verses, Arjuna comes to know Krishna completely and gains His

wisdom of action. Then, acting with His Divine wisdom, Arjuna achieves wisdom in action (7.21 - 7.22). And this world is all about action.

As for the reader of this chapter's journey of verses, it's like stepping onto a mountain path. **God reveals His Hand:** At the mountain's base, the diverse sensory non-transcendent overwhelms the mind: birds flutter about, wind in the trees, fox and squirrel scamper, plants with touch of dew, earthy odors, quaking leaves, all creation manifesting in organs of experience hold onto our perception and limit it. Past experiences and expectations dominate thinking. The present is too short and fleeting, attempting to hold on as we might the mind wanders. A little higher, underlying transcendent patterns emerge; we see forests, lakes, plains, villages, chimney smoke rising, and a distant horizon where all diversity merges into one. It's a long way off. Yet, from our heightened awareness, the present holds some fleeting Oneness. We sense a wholeness out there. 'Something more is going on.' **Maaya:** As soon as 'one plus one equals two' creeps into our consciousness, we climb into a layer of clouds that, from our perspective, fogs non-transcendent experiences and emerging transcendent. We can barely see our hands before our face. We feel uncomfortable with the obscured mountain path ahead. But belief in something more blurs fear and keeps us moving higher. **Man of wisdom:** Emerging from the fog, fluffy cloud-tops stretch to the horizon. We feel alone with God. Moving higher, we sense past and future in the eternal present. The notion of fulfillment dawns. Our steps upward take on their own purpose and go of their own accord: we move with them. Doubts fall behind. **Personal God:** Our journey, the path, non-transcendent and transcendent, fog, singular beauty and truth of fluffy cloud-tops stretching to the horizon lay in the past. Out of belief we realize His Faith is our faith, His principle of increase is our desire. Our outcome is His boon. **Omniscient in the eternal present:** Understanding and experience fall away and our sense of life in the present delightfully defies reason and description. The scales fall from our eyes. Everywhere, we see the imperishable in the perishable. **Wisdom:** Endeavor reaches its goal. Lifelong confusion about our course of action dissipates. We realize: God's wisdom guided our actions all along. The light of faith floods down from on high. We lift our eyes and see loving God smiling down from the summit. Nothing further remains to be known in the world of action. Something in our heart stirs.

Krishna instructs Arjuna to understand and experience His teachings, assuring that this knowledge encompasses everything in the world of action. Transitioning to the following verse, Krishna acknowledges that only a few strive for perfection, attributing this rarity to the perceived irrelevance of higher consciousness during daily life's pursuits.

7.03. Of thousands of men, few strive for perfection. Even among the striving and perfected, hardly anyone truly knows Me.

“I really want to see you, Lord; But it takes so long, my Lord,” George Harrison, *My Sweet Lord*.

Few strive for perfection because higher consciousness — Cosmic, Brahman and God — appear to have little relevance in daily lives of men and women actively engaged in life. There are bills to pay, responsibilities to meet, running about, and optimizing retirement plans. Why strive for perfection when we can achieve happiness, though fleeting, by taking direct action to gain objects of desire? In addition, identifying higher consciousness with the recluse path, which requires years of study, servitude and meditation, puts off people of action. No wonder few strive for perfection, given the recluse path’s bad reputation for people actively engaged in life.

Delusion foils knowing God. All striving and perfection go the way of delusion. Grinding up the spiritual ziggurat is never enough to rise above the delusion of seeing God’s impermanence masking His permanence, that is, of knowing God in both phenomenal and celestial realms. The high bar of knowing God completely — the promise set in the 1st verse — requires belief in God. There is no other way to incorporate God’s sustaining increase than by believing in Him. Even those who have gained perfection in God Consciousness and see Him everywhere continue striving to know Him intimately. Woefully, they strive in a world of delusion where God remains veiled by His own creation. There is only one way out of delusion: belief. We return to themes of delusion, belief and knowing God completely in the 13th verse.

Further, Arjuna is not just “anyone” who scarcely knows God. Arjuna and Krishna have a close working relationship to build upon. Krishna sees Arjuna as His devotee and friend. Krishna, God incarnate, is Arjuna’s charioteer, here to guide him beyond life’s dualities of attraction and aversion that keep an active man bound to the delusion of the phenomenal world. Arjuna sits at Krishna’s feet and has given himself over to following Krishna’s guidance. Being physically close to Krishna and fully dependent on Him for all action uniquely positions Arjuna to behold Krishna’s darshan and truly know Him through the Avatar of his words.

In the following verse, Krishna takes the next step in deepening His relationship with Arjuna, and us, by revealing His nature in the non-transcendent phenomenal world, and in the following eight verses, in the transcendent. Thus, by the 13th verse, we have a handle on Krishna’s true nature, a first step to knowing Him completely. In addition, these following verses underpin the power of ‘faith’ addressed in verse 7.22.

Krishna acknowledges the rarity of those striving for perfection, attributing it to the perceived irrelevance of higher consciousness in daily life. Delusion obstructs knowing God completely, emphasizing the necessity of belief. Transitioning to the following nine verses, Krishna reveals His material and transcendent natures, explaining the intertwined relationship between His non-transcendent and transcendent aspects.

God reveals His hand:

Overview:

Consciousness: Through the mind, the never-changing creates the ever-changing experienced.

In the realm of consciousness, we often find ourselves limited by traditional definitions that paint it as a mere passive awareness. According to these definitions, we simply observe the world around us and within us without altering it. This perspective renders consciousness as a mirror, reflecting our sensory perceptions, thoughts and emotions without exerting any influence. Such a view can leave us feeling puzzled, as consciousness remains a subjective experience, difficult to measure and analyze objectively.

However, the *Bhagavad Gita* offers a transformative perspective by redefining consciousness as an active and creative process. This redefinition profoundly shifts understanding of our relationship with God. In the *Gita*, consciousness actively creates our physical and cognitive experiences rather than passively observing them. Through the triad of experience, consciousness involves the experiencer, the process of experiencing and that which is experienced.

The experiencer, formed from ego and intellect, actively shapes the awareness of the mind. This awareness does not merely reflect reality but informs consciousness, enabling it to create everything we experience in physical and cognitive realms. The process of experiencing acts as a creative force, transforming potential into reality. From this potential, consciousness structures what is experienced, shaping our physical and cognitive realities.

Through this dynamic interplay, we engage in God's creative process. We are not mere observers but active creators of all that exists, including the universe itself. God's principle of increase, coupled with our inherent desire for greater happiness, drives the creation of all reality through His material nature, which divides into eightfold elements.

Verse 7.04 of the *Bhagavad Gita* elucidates this idea, explaining that Krishna's material nature divides into earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego. These elements form the bedrock of physical and cognitive reality, highlighting the active role of the experiencer, the process of experiencing and that experienced. Verses 7.05 to 7.12 further expound on these elements, revealing God's transcendent nature and the foundational

aspects of creative consciousness. While Krishna's lower, non-transcendent nature encompasses the physical and cognitive aspects, His higher, transcendent nature — the Self — sustains all creation, bridging the material and spiritual realms.

In this light, consciousness emerges not as a passive reflection but as a dynamic, creative force. It enables us to participate in the divine act of creation, aligning us with God's expansive and transformative nature. This active view of consciousness enriches our spiritual understanding and enhances our perception of the universe and our place within it.

7.04. Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego are My material nature divided eightfold.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." — *John 1:1-3*.

Experience and creation co-occur. If we don't experience a phenomenon, the phenomenon exists only in the pure-conscious field of all possibilities, the Self. Only the "process of experiencing" brings phenomenal reality into existence through the trilogy of experience: the experienter, the process of experiencing and that experienced.

The Experienter (consciousness):

- 'Ego': 'I.' Out of pure consciousness of Self, "I-ness".
- 'Intellect': 'I am.' Discernment of separateness.
- 'Mind': 'I am aware.' Consciousness completed: through the mind, the never-changing (Self) creates the ever-changing experienced (Earth).

Process of Experiencing:

- 'Ether': The potential of zero, the void containing all possibilities.
- 'Air': The beginning of manifest creation. Subtlest life force; movement; dynamic aspect of existence emerges out of all possibilities.
- 'Fire': Information; messenger of all knowable that underlies all creation; sacrifice of ignorance; life energy out of life force.

That Experienced:

- 'Water': Plasma; divine feminine energy; source of life, growth and nourishment resolved out of information of life energy.
- 'Earth': Physical and cognitive realms we experience, the Gunas at work, all existence born of feminine energy.

To conclude, it is crucial to emphasize the interconnectedness and profound significance of the elements discussed. Through understanding Krishna's eightfold material nature, we recognize the intricate relationship between the experiencer, the process of experiencing and that experienced. This triad is not just a philosophical concept but a practical guide to perceiving and interacting with the world around us.

In this verse, we explored how each element, from ego to earth, plays a vital role in shaping our reality. By acknowledging and integrating these elements into our consciousness, we align ourselves with the divine essence that sustains and permeates all of creation. This awareness elevates our actions, making them a reflection of higher consciousness and leading us toward spiritual enlightenment. As we move forward, let us carry this understanding with us, knowing that every action, thought and experience is an opportunity to deepen our connection with the divine and realize our true nature.

As we transition to verses 7.05 to 7.12, we delve deeper into the understanding of the interplay between Krishna's eightfold material nature and His higher spiritual nature. These upcoming verses elucidate the dynamics between the lower material elements and the superior spiritual essence, offering profound insights into the essence of divine energy. By comprehending this intricate relationship, we gain a clearer perspective on how the material and spiritual realms coexist and influence each other, guiding us towards a more holistic understanding of our existence and the path to enlightenment. This exploration serves as a bridge, connecting the tangible aspects of our world with the intangible spiritual truths, and prepares us to grasp the deeper significance of the divine interplay that governs our lives.

7.05. Such is My lower non-transcendent nature; know this to be inferior to My transcendent nature, the Self, which sustains all creation in the universe.

Emerging 'Ego' (7.04) out of Self:

'My transcendent nature, the Self' is the pure consciousness that sustains all creation in the universe, highlighting its critical role as the driving force behind the manifestation and experience of the material world. Thus, the Self in the context of this verse is not merely the individualized nature of the Self but the pure consciousness that is the essence of all beings and the universe. It is the unchanging, eternal reality that underlies all creation and experience, connecting individual consciousness to the universal essence.

Consciousness is the mind's link between action and nonaction, the bridge between the manifest and the unmanifest. This definition emphasizes consciousness as the emergent "I" of ego (7.04) out of His transcendent nature, the Self.

In this verse, Krishna provides insight into the dual nature of the divine, which encompasses both the manifest and the unmanifest aspects of reality. This

dual nature is essential for understanding the concept of consciousness, which serves as the link between these two realms.

Krishna begins by distinguishing between His lower and higher natures. The lower nature includes the physical and cognitive components of existence. These elements constitute the manifest world, which we experience through our senses and cognitive faculties. This lower nature is characterized by change and impermanence, as it is subject to the cycles of creation and destruction.

In contrast, Krishna's higher nature is transcendent and unmanifest. It is the eternal, unchanging reality that underlies all creation. This higher nature is the Self, which is beyond the limitations of time and space. It is the source of all that exists and the ultimate sustainer of the universe.

Consciousness emerges from the interaction between these two natures. It acts as the bridge between the manifest and the unmanifest, linking the eternal with the temporal. In this context, consciousness is not merely a passive state but an active process that allows the ego (the sense of "I") to arise from the transcendent Self. This emergence of the ego from the Self is what gives us the awareness of individuality—"the I-ness"—while simultaneously connecting us to the universal essence.

Krishna's discourse highlights the importance of recognizing both aspects of His nature to understand the full spectrum of existence. By comprehending His lower nature, we become aware of the material and cognitive processes that govern our daily lives. However, by transcending this understanding and realizing His higher nature, we gain insight — that is, intellectual understanding — into the eternal and unchanging reality that sustains everything.

This dual recognition leads to a deeper spiritual awakening, where in God Consciousness one sees the divine in all aspects of life. The light of the transcendent Self illuminates the lower nature, allowing us to see God everywhere. This "seeing" is a hallmark of God Consciousness, where one experiences the divine unity of all creation.

In summary, this verse elaborates the intricate relationship between Krishna's lower and higher natures, using the concept of consciousness as the linking bridge. This understanding is crucial for those in God Consciousness as it provides a comprehensive view — and explanation of our direct experience, if you will — of the divine and the means to transcend the limitations of the material world. By aligning ourselves with His higher nature, we experience the fullness of divine presence in our lives.

7.06. My transcendent nature births all creatures. Understand this: I am the origin and dissolution of this vast universe.

[God's '*transcendent nature*,' being transcendent, is impossible to describe. Hence this verse and the following lean heavily on metaphor to convey His emergence from '*My transcendent nature, the Self*.']

Emerging '*Intellect*' (7.04) out of Ego:

In this verse, Krishna declares his transcendent nature as the origin and dissolution of the universe, emphasizing the role of his divine essence in the cosmic cycles of creation and dissolution. This process is central to understanding the interplay between intellect and consciousness.

Emerging Intellect and Cosmic Law of Discernment: The emerging intellect, as described in verse 7.04, is pivotal to establishing the cosmic law of discernment. This law, a fundamental principle, guides the evolution of consciousness and consequently, the universe. The first discernment of intellect is the recognition of "I am" out of "I," which emerges from the Self. This emergence of intellect reflects Krishna's transcendent nature favoring increase and evolution over entropy, ensuring the continuous cycles of creation and dissolution.

Intellect as a Vehicle for Conscious Experience: The primary attribute of all living beings is the capacity to experience. Therefore, Krishna's declaration that '*My transcendent nature births all creatures*' extends to the birth of conscious experience itself. Through this, Krishna positions himself as the origin and sustainer of all creation, infusing it with the capacity for experience, which is inherently tied to consciousness.

The Offensive Role of Intellect Under Sattva: Once creation occurs, intellect, guided by the quality of Sattva (goodness), takes an active role. Intellect not only creates but also sustains through the principle of increase. However, this process is cyclical; what is created and sustained will eventually lose its value to further increase and evolution, leading to its dissolution. Out of this dissolution, new creation arises, perpetuating the cycle of evolution fueled by conscious experience.

Integration of Intellect and Consciousness: Krishna's assertion that beyond him nothing exists (following, 7.07) underscores the integral role of consciousness. Through the conscious mind, ego and intellect, Krishna's transcendent nature sustains all creation. The intellect and ego are essential components of "The Experienter," completing the cycle of creation, experience and dissolution. This reflects the profound truth that all desires and actions — and I mean ALL — even those seemingly misguided, aim for greater happiness and are inherently aligned with Krishna's principle of increase.

Intellect as the Instrument of Consciousness: Intellect serves as the instrument through which consciousness navigates material and spiritual realms. It discerns and guides actions in alignment with divine will, facilitating the continuous cycles of creation and dissolution. In doing so, intellect ensures that consciousness evolves, maintaining the dynamic balance necessary for sustenance and growth.

In conclusion, the intellect is deeply connected to consciousness, acting as the vehicle through which His divine will manifests and evolves. Krishna's transcendent nature, as the source of all creation and dissolution, infuses intellect with the capacity to discern, create, sustain, and ultimately dissolve, perpetuating the eternal cycles of the universe.

7.07. *Beyond Me nothing exists. On Me, all is strung like pearls on a thread.*

Emerging 'Mind' (7.04):

Krishna's assertion, '*Beyond Me nothing exists*,' underscores the integral role of consciousness in the existence and perception of all phenomena. This statement is a profound declaration of the all-encompassing nature of the Self, highlighting the interconnectedness of all creation through the unifying awareness that creates and sustains everything. Consciousness, in this context, is not just an observer but the very fabric that weaves together the tapestry of existence.

Krishna likens this interconnectedness to pearls strung on a thread. This metaphor elegantly conveys the idea that while individual experiences (the pearls) may seem distinct and separate, they are fundamentally linked by an underlying, unifying thread of consciousness. This thread represents the continuous, omnipresent awareness that holds the universe together, making it coherent and meaningful.

The concept of "Mind" is crucial here, as it relates to the course of "The Experiencer." The mind's unique ability to link action and nonaction completes the emergence of consciousness from the notions of "I" and "I am," where creation and experience converge into a unified whole. This completion is what enables the Self to become both the creator and the experiencer of its creations.

John Wheeler's quote, "No phenomenon is a real phenomenon until it is an observed phenomenon," resonates deeply with Krishna's message. Without conscious awareness, nothing can truly exist — nothing truly comes into existence. Phenomena remain in a state of potentiality within the field of pure consciousness until observed and experienced. Thus, the acts of creation (origin) and dissolution have no basis without consciousness.

From Krishna's transcendent nature ('*the Self*,' 7.05), a unifying thread of consciousness emerges, completed by the mind, which links all creative impulses into a cohesive experience. This linkage is what turns pure potentiality into tangible reality.

Our inherent drive for happiness aligns our goals with God's. Every human desire and action, even those that appear negative or misguided, are ultimately aimed at achieving increased happiness. This relentless pursuit of

happiness illustrates a profound extension of God's principle of increase. Thus, the goals of the individual Self are perfectly aligned with the divine goal of evolution and increase carried out by the mind.

Conscious mind reveals the layers of 'ego' and 'intellect,' thus completing "The Experienter." It is within this personalized experienter that Krishna '*sustains all creation in the universe.*' All existence, therefore, is a manifestation through the conscious mind of "The Experienter," operating through the refined levels of 'ego' ("I") and 'intellect' ("I am"). This dynamic interplay forms Krishna's transcendent nature, the Self, which sustains the entire creation.

7.08. I am the taste in water, I am the radiance of Sun and Moon, the sacred symbol (Om) in the Vedas, the sound in the ether, and manhood in man.

Emerging 'Ether' (7.04):

Out of conscious '*mind*' (previous verse), emerging ingredients of experience and creation.

Krishna uses a series of metaphors to illustrate His presence in fundamental aspects of nature, highlighting the emergence and essential role of ether. The following shows how these metaphors are linked, illustrating the progression and emergence of ether:

1. '*I am the taste in water*': This metaphor symbolizes Krishna's essential and pervasive nature in the sensory experiences of the material world: taste. Water, vital for life, represents the essence of all fluids, illustrating Krishna's subtle presence in every drop. This foundational sensory experience sets the stage for understanding the subtle and pervasive nature of ether.

2. '*The light of the sun and the moon*': Just as fluidity is an essential sensory experience, light is crucial for visibility and clarity. The light from the sun and moon metaphorically illustrates the illuminating nature of Krishna, bringing awareness and knowledge. This light is pervasive and fundamental, much like ether, which pervades all space. The progression from fluidity to light illustrates an expansion from a basic sensory experience to a universal, all-encompassing phenomenon.

3. '*The sacred syllable Om in the Vedas*': Om, the primordial sound, represents the vibration that underlies the creation of the universe. As light brings visibility, Om brings auditory awareness, connecting the physical to the metaphysical. Ether is the medium through which sound travels, enabling these primordial vibrations to manifest and propagate. Thus, from the illumination of light, we move to the vibrational essence of sound, further illustrating the subtle yet foundational nature of ether.

4. '*I am the sound in ether*': Sound — or vibration — is the precursor form: name and form; no sound, no form. This directly connects to the concept of ether as the element that carries sound. The transition from *Om* to sound in

ether highlights how Krishna's essence is not only the origin of primordial vibrations but also the medium that allows these vibrations to be perceived. This progression shows ether's role in facilitating the manifestation of sound, emphasizing its subtle and pervasive nature.

5. '*Manhood in man*': Finally, the metaphor of manhood of man ties the sensory and elemental experiences to human capabilities. Just as ether is the space within which all physical and metaphysical activities occur, Krishna's divine presence is the space within which all human abilities and potentials are realized and expressed. This final link illustrates how the subtle presence of ether culminates in the emergence of human potential — the potential to create all phenomena — showing the complete integration of ether in all aspects of existence.

By linking these metaphors, Krishna demonstrates a progression from the sensory (taste) to the elemental (light), to the vibrational (Om and sound in ether), and finally to the human (ability). Each step illustrates the emergence and essential nature of ether as the medium that sustains and enables all forms of existence and experience. This interconnectedness shows how ether, as a subtle and undifferentiated yet foundational element, permeates and supports the entire cosmos, manifesting Krishna's transcendent presence in all things.

7.09. I am the pure fragrance in the earth and brightness in fire, the life of all beings and the austerity in ascetics.

Emerging 'Air' (7.04):

Out of ingredients (previous verse), emerging character of experience and creation.

Krishna uses a series of metaphors to illustrate His omnipresence and the essential qualities He embodies in all aspects of creation and experience, particularly emphasizing the element of air. Here's how these metaphors are interconnected, showing the progression and emergence of air:

1. '*Pure Fragrance in the Earth*': This symbolizes the fundamental and pervasive spirit of the undifferentiated relative emerging from the primary ingredients of creation. Just as fragrance pervades and defines the essence of the earth, Krishna's presence infuses all aspects of the material world with a subtle yet unmistakable spiritual quality. This metaphor links to the emergence of air by representing the essence that is carried and diffused through the atmosphere, highlighting how air spreads and permeates all aspects of existence.

2. '*Brightness in Fire*': This represents the primal character sensed through perception. Fire's brightness is a direct sensory experience, symbolizing the clarity and energy that underlie all forms of experience. It reflects the illuminating and dynamic aspects of Krishna's nature, which are essential for

perception and understanding through the senses. Fire requires air to burn, thus this metaphor illustrates how air supports and enhances the dynamic processes of transformation and perception.

3. '*Life of All Beings*': This signifies the enlivening force that animates all living entities. It is the vital energy that makes experience and existence possible. Without this life force, no being can function, making it a direct manifestation of Krishna's sustaining power in the universe. Air is essential for life, as it provides the breath that sustains living beings. This metaphor links air to the vital breath of life, underscoring its fundamental role in sustaining existence.

4. '*Austerity in Ascetics*': This refers to the quality of non-doing that underlies all actions and experiences. Ascetics practice austerity to achieve higher consciousness, symbolizing the silent witnessing aspect of consciousness that allows for Self-awareness. This metaphor underscores Krishna's role as the silent observer, the consciousness that becomes aware of itself. The subtlety and omnipresence of air reflect the silent yet pervasive influence of Krishna's presence, much like the air that is felt but not always seen.

These metaphors progress from the physical and sensory (fragrance of the earth, brightness in fire) to the vital (life of all beings) and finally to the spiritual (austerity in ascetics). This progression illustrates how Krishna permeates every level of existence, from the most tangible elements to the highest spiritual practices, thereby reinforcing His omnipresence and integral role in both the material and spiritual aspects of the universe.

By linking these metaphors, Krishna demonstrates a progression from the sensory to the elemental to the vital and finally to the spiritual, each step illustrating the emergence and essential nature of '*air*' as the medium that sustains and enables all forms of existence and experience. The progression from sensory (pure fragrance in the earth) to elemental (brightness in fire) to vital (life of all beings) to spiritual (austerity in ascetics) shows how Krishna permeates every level of existence, culminating in the pervasive nature of '*air*.'

7.10. Know Me to be the eternal seed of all beings, the intelligence of the intelligent and the radiance of the radiant.

Emerging '*Fire*,' information (7.04):

Out of ingredients and character (previous two verses), emerging assertion of experience and creation.

In this verse, Krishna uses a series of metaphors to explain His essential nature and how it manifests in the world, particularly emphasizing the emergence and transformative qualities of fire. Here's how these metaphors are interconnected, showing the progression and emergence of fire.

1. *'Eternal Seed of All Beings'*: Krishna refers to Himself as the eternal seed, implying that He is the fundamental source and origin of all life. This seed symbolizes the starting point from which all beings originate, representing the core of creation that is timeless and unchanging. Just as a seed contains all the information for an entire plant, Krishna contains the potential for all life and existence — the very essence of information. This metaphor links to the emergence of fire by representing the initial spark of life and creation that sets the stage for further development and transformation.

2. *'Intelligence of the Intelligent'*: This metaphor highlights Krishna as the ultimate source of wisdom and intellect — the components of pure and directed assertion that brings about material creation. Intelligence in this context is not merely cognitive ability but the deeper understanding and discernment that guides beings towards truth and enlightenment. Krishna's intelligence is the foundational wisdom that permeates the minds of all who are wise, making Him the ultimate wellspring of knowledge and insight. Fire is often associated with intellect and insight, representing the illuminating and transformative power of knowledge. This metaphor illustrates how intelligence, like fire, ignites understanding and clarity, driving the process of learning and evolution through the application of information.

3. *'Radiance of the Radiant'*: By referring to Himself as the "radiance of the radiant," Krishna emphasizes His role as the source of all light and brilliance. This light is not only physical illumination but also symbolizes spiritual enlightenment and the inherent beauty that shines through all radiant things — pure information. The radiance is the visible manifestation of Krishna's presence, illuminating and giving life to the world. Fire's radiance symbolizes the culmination of transformation and illumination, showing how Krishna's presence brings clarity, warmth and life to all aspects of existence.

Chain of Metaphors:

1. *'Seed'*: The metaphor of seed relates to the earth and growth, signifying the potential and origin of all life. This foundational metaphor sets the stage for the emergence of fire by representing the initial spark of life and its vital information for evolution.

2. *'Intelligence'*: Intelligence ties to the mind and consciousness, representing the guiding force of understanding and wisdom — the essence of useful information. This metaphor shows the transformative power of intellect, akin to the illuminating qualities of fire.

3. *'Radiance'*: Radiance corresponds to light, symbolizing illumination, clarity, and the visible expression of divine presence — the light of God that shines through Brahman and guides evolution and creation, the very essence of information. This final metaphor illustrates the culmination of the transformative process, highlighting the emergence of fire as a symbol of enlightenment and illumination.

Each metaphor transitions from a more physical and tangible concept (seed) to a more abstract and illuminating concept (radiance), illustrating the

progression from the material foundation of existence to cognitive guidance — that is, information that underlies the physical and cognitive realms — and ultimately to the spiritual enlightenment and manifestation of divine presence. This progression highlights the comprehensive and all-encompassing nature of Krishna's divine role in the cosmos.

In summary, the essence of Krishna's divine presence through the metaphors of seed, intelligence, and radiance, each representing different facets of His integral role in the cosmos as the harbinger of information, the DNA of physical and cognitive existence, if you will. This commentary clarifies the interconnectedness and progression of these metaphors, illustrating how they collectively reveal Krishna's omnipresence and omnipotence in the fabric of existence. Hence, the '*radiance of the radiant*' is the visible manifestation of Krishna's all-knowing and all-wise / omniscient presence — the ultimate information propelling life force — illuminating and giving life to the world through '*fire*.'

Verses 7.08 through 7.10 of the *Bhagavad Gita* describe the emergence of the "Process of Experiencing" by illustrating how Krishna's divine essence manifests in various fundamental aspects of existence. In verse 7.08, Krishna identifies himself with essential elements like the taste of water and the light of the sun and moon, signifying his presence in the sensory experiences that form the basis of perception. Verse 7.09 continues by linking Krishna to the pure fragrance of the earth and the heat in fire, emphasizing the intrinsic qualities that underpin the sensory world. Finally, verse 7.10 culminates this process by asserting Krishna as the eternal seed of all beings, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the radiance of the radiant, thus establishing the foundation for conscious experience and for manifesting creative consciousness.

7.11. And I am the strength of the strong, devoid of desire and attachment; in beings I am desire in accord with dharma.

Emerging '*Water*' (7.05):

Water sets the stage for physical and cognitive existence, the jumping off point for material and mental creation based on pure information alone (previous verse):

Krishna's declaration '*I am the strength of the strong devoid of desire and attachment*' emphasizes His sustaining power. This strength, which supports creation and evolution, is intrinsic to Krishna Himself. It is not an external force or something that can be possessed by others; it is Krishna's own essence. The strength that Krishna refers to is not ordinary strength. It is a transcendent force that exists independently of any worldly desires or attachments. Krishna's Self-sufficient nature means that He does not require anything from the world of action to sustain His principle of increase. This principle is an intrinsic quality of the universe, continuously driving evolution and overcoming entropy without any need for validation or fulfillment.

When Krishna says *'in beings I am desire in accord with dharma,'* He distinguishes between ordinary desires and those aligned with dharma, the cosmic law of righteousness and evolution. Desires that align with dharma express Krishna's principle of increase, aimed at the greater good and the overall evolution of the universe. These desires are inherently selfless and seek to harmonize individual actions with the universal order.

'Strength of the Strong': Krishna is the inherent strength that supports and sustains all creation. This strength is characterized by its independence from desire and attachment, reflecting Krishna's transcendent nature.

'Desire in Accord with Dharma': Krishna embodies desires that align with dharma — right and skillful actions that support evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing. These desires are not personal or selfish but are aligned with His universal principle of increase and evolution. They are feminine in nature.

Self-Sufficiency: Krishna's strength and the desires He embodies are self-sufficient and self-sustaining. They do not depend on external validation or fulfillment but are inherent qualities of Krishna's divine nature.

His Principle of Increase: This principle drives all creation and evolution, constantly moving towards greater organization, harmony and happiness, overcoming the natural tendency towards entropy in the material realms.

Transcendence and Immanence: Krishna's declaration highlights His dual nature. While He transcends all desires and attachments, He is also immanent within beings, guiding them through desires that are in harmony with dharma — the constant desire for increased happiness.

By understanding these metaphors, we see how Krishna's divine qualities permeate all aspects of existence, from the strength that sustains creation to the desires that drive righteous actions. This interconnectedness underscores the holistic nature of Krishna's presence in the universe, where He is both the source of strength and the guiding principle behind righteous desires.

In addition, divine feminine energy, source of life, growth and nourishment resolved out of life energy. *'Water,'* as divine feminine energy, sets the stage for material and cognitive experiences. It is the essence of birthing, life, growth, and nourishment, emerging from the life energy symbolized by *'Fire.'* This feminine aspect of divine energy complements masculine strength, bringing balance and harmony to the process of creation and evolution.

7.12. And finally, know whatever modes of action pertaining to Sattva, and also those of Rajas and Tamas, proceed from Me alone. But I am not in them, they are in Me.

Emerging *'Earth'* (7.04), where the gunas act on gunas:

Krishna's statement in this verse is understood through a series of interconnected metaphors that elucidate the relationship between the divine and the three gunas.

Origin of Action: Krishna asserts that all modes of action, be they Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), or Tamas (ignorance), emanate from Him. This means that every action within these three categories has its roots in the divine essence of Krishna. This highlights His role as the ultimate source of all dynamism and activity in the universe.

The Thread and Pearls: Just as a thread runs through and supports a string of pearls, Krishna is the underlying support and foundation of all actions influenced by the gunas. The pearls (actions) are visible and distinct, but they are all held together by the unseen thread (Krishna).

Transcendence: Despite originating from Him, Krishna is not confined within these gunas. This suggests that while He is the source of these modes, He remains beyond their influence. He is transcendent, much like the thread remains unaffected — and unseen — by the individual pearls strung on it.

Containment: The gunas are contained within Krishna, but He is not contained within them. This metaphor implies a hierarchical structure where the divine essence encompasses all qualities and actions, yet remains unbounded by them. It is akin to the ocean containing waves of different intensities but not being limited to any single wave.

Divine Sustenance: Krishna's role as the sustainer of creation is emphasized here. Even as the gunas interact and create various experiences and actions, they do so within the realm of Krishna's sustaining power (*Sattva*). This metaphor portrays Krishna as the universal ground upon which all activities rest.

By understanding these metaphors, we see that Krishna is the fundamental cause and support of all actions influenced by the three gunas. He is the ultimate source, yet remains detached and transcendent, encompassing all without being confined by any.

This verse not only illustrates the profound interconnectedness of the divine with the material world but also emphasizes Krishna's imperishable and transcendental nature — which will come in handy when transcending Maaya (following verses). It sets the stage for seeing the divine essence in all aspects of action and creation — in God Consciousness — while also understanding the distinct, superior nature of Krishna that remains unaffected by the mutable qualities of the gunas: the imperishable in the perishable.

The teachings in verses 7.05 to 7.12 have provided a profound understanding of the interplay between Krishna's material and transcendent natures. We have seen how Krishna distinguishes His lower, non-transcendent nature, comprising the eightfold material elements, from His superior, transcendent Self, which sustains all creation. This duality highlights the crucial role of consciousness as the bridge between the

manifest and unmanifest realms, underscoring that all phenomena are underpinned by divine awareness. Furthermore, Krishna's manifestations in various elements of nature, from the fluidity of water to the radiance of the sun, symbolize the omnipresence of the divine in every aspect of existence. By recognizing that all modes of action, whether of goodness, passion or ignorance, emanate from Krishna's energy, we understand that while He encompasses everything, He remains transcendent and unaffected by the mutable qualities of the material world. This knowledge fosters a deeper appreciation of the divine essence inherent in all creation, guiding us toward a holistic and enlightened understanding of our existence and our spiritual journey.

The following section summarizes this section on "God reveals His hand" in terms of the Participatory Anthropic Principle fueled by God's principle of increase.

Summary — Participatory Anthropic Principle:

The Participatory Anthropic Principle (PAP) posits that the universe and consciousness are intrinsically linked, with the presence of conscious observers playing a crucial role in shaping the cosmos. According to this principle, the universe's fundamental properties and the emergence of complexity are not merely coincidental but are influenced by the participation of conscious beings. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, verses 7.04 to 7.12 elucidate this interconnectedness through the concept of Krishna's "material nature divided eightfold." Each element — ego, intellect, mind, ether, air, fire, water, and earth — emerges in sequence, reflecting a participatory process where conscious mind creates the physical and cognitive realms of the universe. This eightfold order demonstrates how the elements of the universe evolve from the subtle to the gross, guided by an underlying consciousness that both experiences and participates in the unfolding of creation. The PAP underscores the notion that the universe's structure and existence deeply interweave with the awareness of a conscious mind that links the never-changing Self with ever-changing existence, aligning with the *Gita*'s depiction of a dynamic and participatory cosmos.

Ego from Self

We all experience a personalized nature of the Self. To use myself as an example, there's a part of Keith Parker that never changes, that appears to be unbounded by time and space. True enough, now an octogenarian, I have gone through many physical and cognitive changes. But yet, there's a part of me — a part, interestingly enough, I am aware of — that has never changed, the Self. Same for you.

From the unbounded and contented higher Self, which represents pure consciousness and unbounded awareness, emerges the ego. The ego is the sense of individuality that creates a distinct identity separate from the universal Self. It acts as the focal point of personal experience, interpreting the Self through a lens of separation and distinction. This sense of 'I' becomes the driving force behind individual actions and perceptions, grounding the unbounded awareness into a personalized existence. The ego's emergence marks the beginning of consciousness, providing a reference point for further differentiation and interaction with the material world.

Intellect from Ego

From the ego, which establishes individuality and a sense of self, emerges the intellect. The intellect is the faculty of discernment. It allows the ego to navigate the complexities of the material world. The intellect processes sensory inputs and past experiences to create a coherent understanding and guide actions towards higher levels of spiritual and material wellbeing and happiness — the purpose of life. This emergence aligns with God's principle of increase and signifies the transition from mere identity to cognitive engagement with the environment, enabling the individual to differentiate between various aspects of existence and make informed choices on increasing spiritual and material wellbeing.

Mind from Intellect

From the intellect, with its capabilities of analysis and judgment, emerges the mind. The mind encompasses thoughts, emotions, memories, and desires, functioning as the dynamic repository of all mental activities. While the intellect provides the framework for decision-making, the mind adds depth through feelings and imagination. It allows for the internalization of experiences and the formation of complex mental landscapes. The mind is where thoughts are generated and processed.

Just as important, mind — the greater mind which includes intellect and ego — links the never-changing Self with the ever-changing “Earth.” This link is consciousness itself, witnessing changing physical and cognitive realms under the influence of Nature's Gunas, all seemingly running of their own accord.

Ether from Mind

From the mind, which houses thoughts and emotions, emerges awareness of ether, representing the potential for all mental and physical activities — known and unknown. Ether is the subtlest of the elements, providing the necessary expanse for the existence and interaction of matter and energy. It embodies the concept of space, allowing the mind's contents to manifest and interact within a boundless arena. This emergence of ether signifies the transition from internal mental processes to the creation of spatial and cognitive dimensions that supports the potential for physical forms and an active mind.

Air from Ether

From ether, the element of potentially rich but empty space, emerges air. Air represents movement and dynamism within the infinite spatial expanse of ether. It signifies the principle of motion, breath and life. The emergence of air introduces activity and energy into the stillness of ether, enabling the processes of respiration, circulation and communication. This transition highlights the very beginning of physical and cognitive manifestation and interaction, where the subtle space of ether gives rise to the tangible and mobile qualities of air supporting physical and cognitive realms.

Fire from Air

From air, characterized by its movement and dynamism, emerges fire. Fire represents information to transform. It is the force that catalyzes change and drives the processes of metabolism and energy conversion. The friction and interaction within air generate the heat and light of fire, symbolizing the transformative power of information that alters states of matter and cognitive experiences. Fire's emergence signifies the ability to transform, consume and radiate information foundational to physical and cognitive form, marking a crucial step in the materialization process where divine energy becomes more pronounced and impactful.

Water from Fire

From fire, with its transformative heat and light, emerges water. Water represents plasma, liquidity, cohesion, and adaptability and is the subtlest use of information. The cooling and condensation of fire's energy produce the fluid and nourishing element of water. Water's emergence signifies the transition from the volatile and transformative nature of pure information to the stabilizing and life-sustaining properties of liquid. It embodies the principles of flow, nourishment and the capacity to dissolve and integrate different substances, contributing to the formation of existence.

Earth from Water

From water, characterized by its liquidity and adaptability, emerges earth. Earth represents solidity, stability and structure — for both physical and cognitive realms. The solidification and crystallization of water's properties give rise to tangible forms. This emergence marks the culmination of the materialization process, where the most subtle elements progressively condense into the most solid, stable and sustainable form. Earth provides foundation and support, embodying the qualities of endurance, firmness and reliability in physical and cognitive realms.

In conclusion, the Participatory Anthropic Principle (PAP) elegantly underscores the dynamic interplay between consciousness and the universe, highlighting how conscious beings actively shape the cosmos. This principle finds profound resonance in the *Bhagavad Gita*'s depiction of Krishna's "material nature divided eightfold" (verses 7.04 to 7.12). Here, each element — ego, intellect, mind, ether, air, fire, water, and earth — emerges in sequence, illustrating a participatory process where the presence of consciousness facilitates the unfolding of existence and our experience of it. God's principle of increase fuels this emergence, driving the evolution from subtle to gross forms and ensuring that each step contributes to a more harmonious and life supporting complexity. This divine principle of increase imbues the cosmos with a purposeful progression, emphasizing that the universe's growth and diversification are not random but are guided by a conscious, participatory force that seeks to enhance and expand creation in a way that enhances our spiritual and material wellbeing — and happiness. Thus, the PAP and God's principle of increase together reveal a universe that is both deeply interconnected and continuously evolving through the active engagement of consciousness with creating and experiencing our material and cognitive realms.

Maaya:

God describes Maaya as an illusion woven from the three Gunas — qualities of Nature that influence our perception and actions. This delusion, deeply rooted in the material world, obscures our vision of God's imperishable and eternal nature. The universe, under the spell of Maaya, fails to recognize this higher reality of permanence, leading us into a maze of confusion and ignorance.

God's explanation reveals that Maaya is not merely an obstacle but a divine construct. It is both a challenge and a path to spiritual growth. We cannot

outthink or outmaneuver Maaya because our very thoughts and actions are tainted by it. Instead, we must seek refuge in God, transcending the delusion through God Consciousness. In this state, we see God everywhere, perceiving the imperishable within the perishable. This unified vision dispels the fog of Maaya, lifting fear and anger from our hearts.

Transcending Maaya involves a profound shift in perception. When we “see” the permanence underlying all creation, we cancel the delusion of diversity. This enlightenment is not merely an intellectual understanding but an experiential reality. Through God Consciousness, we align ourselves with the eternal unity that pervades the universe, dissolving the illusory barriers erected by Maaya.

Yet, the path to this realization is fraught with challenges. Evil doers, described as the lowest of men, fall prey to Maaya, relying on their demonic tendencies. These individuals, deluded by Maaya, do not seek God and instead indulge in transient pleasures. They hinder their spiritual and material evolution, dragging others down with them. Their actions, driven by selfishness and a lack of empathy, contrast sharply with the benevolent souls who honor God and seek higher knowledge.

The benevolent souls, in their pursuit of God, embody the qualities that transcend Maaya. They seek refuge in God Consciousness, striving for spiritual wellbeing and enlightenment. This quest aligns them with the imperishable nature of God, guiding them through the labyrinth of delusion. Their journey reflects the profound truth that only through surrendering to God can we overcome the veil of Maaya and attain true liberation.

In conclusion, the teachings on Maaya illuminate the dual nature of delusion and divinity. While Maaya deludes us, it also offers a path to transcendence. By seeking refuge in God and embracing God Consciousness, we see through the illusion and experience imperishable unity of creation in its perishable nature. This journey, marked by the struggle against demonic tendencies and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, leads us to the ultimate realization of God's imperishable nature. In this state, Maaya loses its power, and we find ourselves in the serene embrace of divine truth.

7.13. The entire universe, deluded by the influence born of the three Gunas, does not recognize My imperishable nature which is higher than them and eternal.

‘Deluded by the influence born of the three Gunas,’ God’s inferior perishable nature (7.04) deludes us from seeing His superior imperishable nature (7.05

– 7.12). This delusion of the perishable, diverse and relative nature of creation hiding His singular eternal imperishable nature is called Maaya.

7.14. Divine is this Maaya of Mine, comprised of the Gunas and veiled by them. Only those who resort to My refuge, transcend this veil of delusion.

“There must be some kind of way outta here / Said the joker to the thief / There's too much confusion / I can't get no relief,” Bob Dylan, *All Along the Watchtower*.

The “way outta here”: Seeing God everywhere — seeing the imperishable in the perishable — the fog of Maaya lifts. Fear and anger depart.

Since the Gunas are in His Divine Being (7.12) and since the Gunas also comprise Maaya (previous verse), ‘*Divine is this Maaya of Mine.*’ So, not only are we deluded by Maaya (previous verse), Maaya is also Divine. Being of His Divine creation, the delusion of Maaya is a tough nut to crack.

We can't think or in any way navigate our way out of this ‘*Maaya of Mine.*’ Thinking itself may be a product of pure consciousness but the subject of our thinking is virtual. How can thinking, which is subject to delusion, out strategize and overcome His Divine Maaya? Seemingly our backs are up against the proverbial wall. We can never ‘*transcend this veil of delusion*’ on the level of action because action — be it physical or mental — engages the Gunas of action and perpetuates their ‘*veil*’ of delusion.

‘*Only those who resort to My refuge, transcend this delusion.*’ In the refuge of God Consciousness (6.32), we see God everywhere, unifying all diversity in creation. We see the imperishable in the perishable. [In His material nature (7.04) we see His transcendent nature (7.05 – 7.12).] In seeing God everywhere, the “process of experiencing” transcends the delusion of diversity, that is, transcends Maaya (7.13). “That experienced” is real and the eternal unity underlying the many. Maaya begone.

Knowledge structures consciousness (Rik Veda): the subjective knower in God Consciousness knows the objective unity of God underlying all creation. One actually sees the imperishable underlying the perishable. All pervasive unity cancels Maaya.

7.15. Evil doers, the lowest of men, deluded by Maaya do not seek Me, dependent as they are on demonic tendencies.

Fail to transcend delusion (previous verse), live delusion. Rather than seek ‘*My imperishable nature*’ and transcend this delusion in God Consciousness, ‘*evil doers*’ look to ‘*Maaya*’ as real. They seek the delusion of ‘*Maaya*’ as a refuge from their natural desire to seek increase in spiritual wellbeing and to travel the long path to know God (7.03).

Agents of entropy, '*evil doers*' retard evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing (2.47). Short on human qualities of community, empathy, brotherly love, and a sense of wonder, they selfishly choose to seek nothing beyond '*Maaya*.' Dependent on their habit of exercising '*demonic tendencies*' to retard evolution, '*evil doers*' seek the undoing of others, taking pleasure in bringing others down to their level, '*the lowest of men*.'

Rather than honor God (following verse), '*evil doers*,' who exercise '*demonic tendencies*' to find transient pleasure, choose to shun and dishonor Him, though, in fact, they recognize Him. '*Deluded by Maaya [they] do not seek Me*' as worthy of knowing and as the ultimate refuge of imperishable beyond the spiritual pain of delusion they suffer wallowing in Maaya. Seek not, find not.

Evil doers, deluded by Maaya, shun the pursuit of God in divine refuge. They embrace demonic tendencies, hinder spiritual and material evolution seek transient pleasures, dragging others down with them. In contrast, the following verse reveals four types of benevolent souls honoring God: the distressed, seekers of knowledge, seekers of wealth, and the wise.

Man of wisdom:

Overview:

Four kinds of benevolent men honor God: the distressed, seekers of knowledge, seekers of wealth and the man of wisdom. Each one, in his way, seeks the refuge of God Consciousness. However, among these, the man of wisdom reigns supreme, devoted to the Supreme God, finding true fulfillment in honoring Him.

"Seek and ye shall find," says Matthew 7:7. This quest for divine connection reveals itself in various forms. The distressed, often cornered by life's challenges, see God as a beacon of hope. They seek release from material poverty and life's turbulence, finding solace in His presence. Seekers of knowledge delve deeper, acknowledging both God's transcendent and non-transcendent natures. They aim to smooth their journey through understanding, seeking refuge to gain experience and wisdom. The seekers of wealth pursue material and spiritual wellbeing, desiring prosperity as the foundation for their spiritual growth.

These first three types favor petitionary prayer, viewing God as their benefactor in the phenomenal world. They honor God but often focus on the material over the spiritual, sometimes turning to gods rather than the Supreme God.

In contrast, the man of wisdom finds fulfillment not in petitioning for material gains but in deepening his gratitude and modesty. This wise man truly seeks to know God, even though the full understanding of God remains elusive. His prayers express thankfulness, rather than seeking increase in the phenomenal world. Devoted to the Supreme God, he stands preeminent among benevolent men. God is dear to him, and he is dear to God.

Krishna admonishes Arjuna to focus his devotion on the Supreme God, not to dilute it across many gods. Devotion to the Supreme brings preeminence among seekers and union with God. Desire in accord with dharma guides the man of wisdom, whose actions align with Krishna's principle of increase. This steadfast focus helps him transcend the delusion of Maaya and find refuge in the Divine.

Among those who honor God, the man of wisdom remains unique. His unwavering devotion and steadfast intellect lead him to understand God's transcendent nature. This personal relationship with God grows as he seeks refuge in Him alone, becoming dear to God.

All benevolent men are exalted, yet the man of wisdom achieves the supreme goal by establishing his intellect in God. While the distressed, seekers of knowledge and seekers of wealth see the immediate steps in front of them, they often miss God at the top of the stairs. The man of wisdom, however, sees beyond these steps. His desires and actions, guided by Divine wisdom and dharma, unite him with God.

Krishna distinguishes these four types of benevolent individuals who honor Him for various reasons. The man of wisdom, after many births, takes refuge in the ultimate understanding of Vasudeva, knowing that He is all. Such a great soul remains rare and valuable.

This journey towards wisdom validates the effort to strive for perfection. Only after many births does the man of wisdom take refuge in God, transcending the delusion of Maaya. Knowing Vasudeva conveys the essential Oneness that constitutes everything. The man of wisdom transcends experience itself, uniting with the Divine.

Krishna emphasizes the rarity of the great soul who, after many births, understands the all-encompassing nature of Vasudeva. This soul, supplanting the experience-bound man, becomes the Higher Self, breaking free from the cycle of experience and uniting with Krishna's transcendent nature. Thus, the journey to wisdom culminates in a profound and rare union with the Divine.

7.16. *Four kinds of benevolent men honor Me: the distressed, seekers of knowledge, seekers of wealth, and the man of wisdom.*

To 'honor Me' is to show sincere gratitude for guidance and revealing 'My transcendent nature, the Self' (7.05). Spontaneous gratitude to God transcends the space-time delusion of 'Maaya' (7.14), finds My refuge in the ever-present, and thwarts negative feelings and wrong actions ('*Evil doers*' and '*demonic tendencies*,' previous verse).

In contrast to the negative character of '*evil doers*,' '*benevolent men*' intend to do good and perform right actions to support spiritual and material evolution (2.47). They '*honor Me*' by recognizing Me to the degrees of gratitude they're capable of showing.

For four different reasons, they seek my refuge in God Consciousness (7.14).

The first three lack fulfillment and seek release, increased understanding and experience, and material comfort, respectively. '*The distressed*,' backed into a corner, see Me as a way out and seek refuge from material poverty and turbulence in life. '*Seekers of knowledge*' acknowledge My transcendent and non-transcendent natures; they seek refuge to gain understanding and experience, and smooth the path forward based on deepening knowledge of Me. '*Seekers of wealth*' desire to improve material and spiritual wellbeing on the foundation of prosperity.

These first three '*kinds of benevolent men*' tend to favor petitionary prayer and in this way, honor God as their supreme benefactor in the phenomenal world. Their notion of fulfillment tends to favor the material over the spiritual. In pursuing the material, they tend to favor gods over God (following verse).

Rather than petition God, '*the man of wisdom*' alone gains fulfillment in honoring Him by seeking to deepen feelings of gratitude, modesty and fulfillment. '*The man of wisdom*' truly seeks to know God, even though he is uncertain of what knowing God ultimately means. In seeking fulfillment, he favors the spiritual over the material. Though he can be a bit fuzzy on what "spiritual" means, he seeks God as the means to his fulfillment. He prays more to express thankfulness than to petition increase in the phenomenal world.

Four benevolent types honor Me: the distressed, seekers of knowledge, seekers of wealth, and the man of wisdom. Among these, the man of wisdom, devoted to the One, is preeminent. God is dear to him, and he is dear to God (following verse).

7.17. *Among these benevolent men, the man of wisdom, eternally steadfast, and devoted to the One is preeminent. I am dear to him and he is dear to Me.*

Krishna admonishes Arjuna not to dilute devotion across a plurality of gods. Why spread honor across gods, who themselves behold God as Supreme?

Devoted to the One [God] achieve preeminence among seekers and achieve union with God. [More on this theme of Supreme God in verses 7.20 – 7.23.]

'Desire in accord with dharma' (7.11) guides the *'man of wisdom'*; Krishna's principle of increase guides the *'man of wisdom'* (7.11). *'Devoted to the One [God, aka Krishna],'* who is everything and constitutes everything, the wise steadfastly focus on taking refuge in *'the One'* and transcending delusion of Maaya (7.14). Through *'desire in accord with dharma,'* their actions guided by His principle of increase are, by definition, *'devoted to the One'* and *'the One'* alone. The devoted *'man of wisdom'* faithfully walks the path of indeterminant length (7.03). Seeking refuge in Me above all else (previous verse), the wise develop a personal relationship with God, *'I am dear to him.'* Because My Divine wisdom of increase in evolution guides him towards knowing Me, *'he is dear to Me.'*

Among those who honor Me, the man of wisdom is preeminent. Devoted to the One, eternally steadfast, he gains My transcendent nature. I am dear to him, and he is dear to Me. All benevolent men are exalted, but the man of wisdom, devoted to the One, engages his intellect to become established in Me, the supreme goal (following verse).

7.18. All these benevolent men are exalted. But the man of wisdom is My own Self. His steadfast intellect engages to become established in Me, the supreme goal.

'All these [four] are exalted' above non-seekers and *'evil doers.'* They see the value of higher states of spiritual and material wellbeing, and actively seek to achieve them by honoring Me in their own way (7.16). However, because of their lower levels of consciousness, the first three petition Him to provide:

- a way out of dark corners of spiritual and material poverty,
- increased levels of understanding and experience to smooth the journey,
- comforting wealth to focus resources on Him.

That is, *'the distressed, seekers of knowledge and seekers of wealth'* see the steps in front of them but not God at the top of the stairs.

On the other hand, the *'man of wisdom is My own Self.'* His desires and actions guided by My Divine wisdom of increase in accord with dharma (7.11, previous verse), the man of wisdom's *'steadfast intellect'* ceaselessly engages in discerning increase in evolution to know Me. The man of wisdom gains a personal relationship with Me. *'Eternally steadfast, and devoted to the One [God]'* (previous verse), *'the man of wisdom'* unites with Me and *'is My own Self.'* He *'gains my transcendent nature, the Self'* (7.05) in his desires and actions in accord with dharma. Guided by My principle of increase, steadfastly he engages his intellect to climb the steps in front of him and unite with Me in My Divine wisdom at the top of the stairs.

In this and the following verse, Krishna distinguishes four kinds of benevolent individuals who honor Him. The distressed, seekers of knowledge, seekers of wealth, and the man of wisdom each seek His refuge for various reasons. The man of wisdom, preeminent among them, gains a personal relationship with God, and, after many births, takes refuge in the ultimate understanding of Vasudeva.

7.19. At the end of many births, the man of wisdom takes refuge in Me, knowing Vasudeva (Krishna) is all. Such a great soul is rare indeed.

This verse validates efforts to strive for perfection (7.03)

Only '*at the end of many births, the man of wisdom takes refuge in Me*' and transcends the delusion of Maaya (7.14). Clarity of vision overtakes '*Maaya*' and transcends delusion through '*steadfast intellect*' (previous verse). '*Vasudeva*' conveys the essential Oneness that is everything and constitutes everything. The man of wisdom not only transcends '*Maaya*,' he gains Oneness with it. Consequently, there is no difference among the pearls on the thread (7.07). The medium of experience and gradations among actions evaporate. '*Knowing Vasudeva*' transcends experience; experience of experience fades.

'*Such a great soul is rare indeed*' supplants '*Of thousands of men, few strive for perfection.*' (7.03). '*Great soul*' supersedes '*men.*' Men experience. Soul is. Higher Self supersedes lower self. Through Krishna's '*transcendent nature, the Self*' (7.05) the '*great soul*' breaks free from experience (7.04).

Krishna emphasizes the rarity of the great soul who, after many births, takes refuge in Him, knowing the all-encompassing nature of Vasudeva. Transitioning to the following verse, those with wisdom carried away by desires turn to other gods, following diverse religious rites, influenced by their own inclinations.

Personal God:

Overview:

Our desires often lead us astray, pulling us toward various goals and religious rites. Men whose wisdom has been carried away by these desires resort to other gods, compelled by their own nature. They lose the steadfast intellect that honors the Supreme God and instead, seek finite material goals, clinging to the horizontal plane of life.

Krishna, in His wisdom, emphasizes the importance of belief and the power of faith. He bestows steady faith upon those who desire to act with belief in any honored form. This belief extends beyond the forms of gods to various ideologies and principles. The fundamental belief lies not in the honored

forms but in the principle of increase that God embodies. Even without explicit belief in Him, a *de facto* trust in this principle allows us to achieve strong conviction and desired outcomes.

Krishna makes it clear that He, who endows faith, desires and outcomes, guides our actions. Those who engage with His endowed faith achieve their desires because He ordains them. This relationship with God personalizes and optimizes our faith, desire and outcome, aligning them with our evolution and dharma. Even without acknowledging Him, we benefit from His principle of increase, which carries us through life's challenges.

Despite the allure of fulfilling desires through various honored forms, Krishna warns that the fruits gained from limited understanding are fleeting. Those who worship other gods repeatedly seek fulfillment in finite goals, remaining bound to the horizontal plane of life. They live in ignorance, eternally seeking satisfaction through honored forms.

Within the finite lies the infinite; within the pursuit of finite goals lies the unbounded Supreme God. Steady faith, desire, and outcomes are His doing, not ours or the gods'. Understanding His infinite nature within our finite experiences, we naturally honor Him with gratitude.

Gratitude to God confirms our belief and strengthens our faith. By honoring Him through gratitude, we align our desires and outcomes with His will. This alignment breaks the bondage to action and allows us to rise on the vertical plane of life, naturally coming to Him. Gratitude sprouts wings of faith, transforming our journey into one of spiritual ascent.

The journey from seeking favor from a plurality of gods to honoring the Supreme God reflects a deeper understanding and evolution. Both societies and individuals evolve through this process, moving from the pursuit of finite goals to the realization of a higher, spiritual fulfillment. Krishna's teachings highlight the power of belief and the necessity of gratitude in this transformative journey.

In conclusion, Krishna's verses illustrate the significance of belief and the power of faith in achieving desired outcomes. They emphasize God's role in granting steadfast faith and fulfilling desires, urging us to honor Him with gratitude. By understanding and embracing His principles, we move beyond fleeting desires and finite goals, ascending to a higher plane of spiritual wellbeing.

7.20. *Men whose wisdom has been carried away by this or that desire resort to other gods, following this or that religious rite, compelled by their own nature.*

'Men whose wisdom has been carried away,' men who have lost His guidance in action (7.24 – 7.30).

'This or that' lends a sense of indifference and ambivalence to 'desire' and 'religious rite.' 'This or that desire' for this or that object of the senses fails to meet the high standard of 'desire in accord with dharma' (7.11). 'Men whose wisdom has been carried away by this or that desire' lose guidance, 'steadfast' intellect, honor to 'One' God, 'preeminence,' knowing 'Vasudeva,' and the rarity of a 'great soul' (previous three verses). Having limited belief in God, failing to understand their personal relationship with Him and losing His guidance in action, they engage in 'this or that religious rite' and 'resort to other gods.' Wisdom and guidance 'carried away,' they feel 'compelled by their own nature' to gain support from some higher authority to achieve finite material goals of 'this or that desire.' Their desires still glue them to the horizontal plane (7.23).

In the following verse, Krishna emphasizes the importance of belief and the power of faith. He explains that those who act with belief in any honored form receive steady faith from Him.

7.21. *Whosoever desires to act with belief in whatever honored form, on him I bestow steady faith.*

"Everything is possible for one who believes." — Mark 9:23.

'Honored form' refers to 'other gods' (previous verse). Here, other gods represent forces of Nature through which God's principle of increase takes favorable form, for example, 'honored form' in parentheses, fortune (*Lakshmi*; lady luck), success (*Saraswati*; luck of the draw), remover of obstacles (*Ganesha*; barrier-breaker). Through a specific god in 'whatever honored form,' we gain its influence in our endeavors. 'Honored form' also include 'belief' in various *isms*: egoism, environmentalism, educationalism, atheism, politicisms, and other stratagems, stratagems that require 'following this or that ... rite' with firm belief to achieve desired ends.

'Belief' is the operative word in this verse. The fundamental 'belief' lies not in honored forms but in the belief of increase, His increase. That is, humankind believes the universe is structured in such a way that through earnest endeavors His principle of increase will carry us through ups and downs and other challenges to our desired outcome. We accept His principle of increase as true. Even if we don't believe in Him, *de facto* belief in His principle of increase is good enough to achieve strong conviction and trust not necessarily based on tangible evidence. Through belief in His principle of increase, we gain His 'steady faith' without, even without associating Him into

our belief and endeavors. However, as we shall see, regarding knowing Him and coming to Him, acknowledgement and gratitude to Him are necessary (7.23).

In this and the following verse, Krishna emphasizes the power of '*belief*,' stating that whoever desires to act with belief in any honored form receives steady faith from Him. He asserts that He bestows faith and fulfills desires ordained by Him. These two verses highlight the significance of belief in achieving desired outcomes and emphasize God's role in granting steadfast faith.

It gets even more personal.

7.22. He, who, engaged in action with My endowed faith, who desires to gain from that form receives his desires because those desires are ordained by Me.

Our faith, desire and outcome are His Faith, Desire and Outcome. Personal God indeed.

As '*belief*' seeds '*steady faith*,' (previous verse) steady faith sustains desire, action and outcome in accord with evolution. '*Faith*' resides in God's domain. In addition, God determines '*desire*' to achieve an outcome for those '*engaged*' in action with His '*endowed faith*' because '*of desire in accord with dharma*' (7.11), that is, desire in accord with increase. Reflecting back on verse 7.11: '*I am desire in accord with dharma*' is Krishna's principle of increase, plain and simple, which brings to fruition "That Experienced" in the trilogy of experience (7.04). Desire in accord with dharma is none other than Krishna Himself. Hence your desire in accord with dharma is not Krishna's desire. He has no desires. It is Krishna Himself and the penultimate step to the Gunas taking action to create "That Experienced" (Earth in 7.04; 7.11, 7.12). And '*because those desires are determined by Me*,' God bestows the desired outcome

Through belief in God's principle of increase — that is, through God Himself — we open channels of '*steady faith*' in action. Such is the nature of a personal God, to personalize — and optimize — faith, desire and outcome in accord with your evolution, your '*desire in accord with dharma*' even if you don't believe in Him.

Getting '*this or that*' desire fulfilled through '*whatever honored form*' sounds good enough (7.20). So why bother with the arduous trek (7.03) to know and come to the Supreme God? Why bother to honor God over gods? Why reach beyond '*this or that desire*' born of attachment, finite goals and '*other gods*'?

Because there's a catch, a big one.

7.23. *But fleeting is the fruit gained for those with limited understanding. To the gods the god worshiping go. Those who honor Me will surely come to Me.**

“Thus saith the Lord, Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first, and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God.” — *Isaiah* 44:6.

There is more to life than ‘*fleeting*’ and unfulfilling material goals. While necessary to the nuts and bolts of survival and living a life of increase in wellbeing, material goals never fulfill. In fact, having attention on gods, and their assistance in achieving finite material goals, leads to bondage to action and living on the horizontal plane of life (see cycles of “impression-desire-action,” 2.39).

Those with ‘*limited understanding*’ of the True source of faith, desire and outcome, which is God (previous two verses), ‘*resort to other gods*’ (7.20). And ‘*To the gods the god worshiping go*’ again and again and again *ad infinitum*, seeking fulfillment in finite goals, stuck on the horizontal plane of life, bound to unfulfilling experiences and unrealized expectations, living in ignorance, eternally seeking fulfillment through ‘*honored form*.’

Verses 7.20 - 7.22 lift the veil of ‘*limited understanding*.’ Within the finite lies the infinite. Within gaining a finite goal lies the unbounded Supreme God. Steady faith, desire and outcome are His doing, not the gods, certainly not ours. Knowing through understanding and experience that His infinite nature (His ‘*transcendent nature, the Self*,’ 7.05) lies in gaining the finite (‘*My material nature divided eightfold*,’ 7.04), we naturally come to honor Him with gratitude.

‘*Those who honor Me will surely come to Me.*’ We honor God through our gratitude. All gratitude lives in the present. Gratitude to God is superlative and transcends the delusion of all finite and relative (7.14). Attention on the eternal present, we break bondage to action, rise on the vertical plane of life and naturally ‘*come to*’ Him. That’s all it takes to sprout wings of faith: gratitude to God.

Gratitude confirms our ‘*belief*’ (7.21) and out of belief, faith, determined desire and His boon. Honor God through gratitude and automatically, His Faith, His principles of love and increase, and His Outcome become our faith, desire and outcome — after all, we are His “material nature divided eightfold.” And as we shall see in the following verses, his omniscient wisdom becomes our wisdom. Only a loving and personal God could bond such an intimate relationship and meet our needs to achieve higher material and spiritual wellbeing. To travel His path, to come to Him and know Him completely, and to unite with Him, God only asks for ‘*belief*’ in Him and to get the job done, honoring Him (this verse) through gratitude for all He does to meet our natural and gnawing need to achieve fulfillment, that is, to come to Him.

*These four verses (7.20 – 7.23) illustrate the *Gita*’s monotheism and religious tolerance.

Omniscient in the eternal present:

Overview:

In the eternal present, Lord Krishna’s nature transcends the limitations of human perception. He possesses wisdom that remains unsurpassed, yet many fail to recognize His true essence. When individuals perceive Him only through their senses and bounded minds, they see the unmanifest as manifest and ordinary. This perception limits their understanding of His imperishable and unsurpassed nature.

Krishna reveals that His Divine nature remains hidden by Yoga-Maaya. This deluded world fails to recognize Him as unborn and unchanging. Even those who attain God Consciousness still grapple with the delusion that accompanies it. They see God everywhere, but this “everywhere” remains manifest and perishable. The true unmanifest and imperishable essence of Divine Maaya eludes them.

Krishna remains unmanifest in the finite perception of the present. Although He appears in human form as an Avatar of Vishnu, His true nature is “not apparent to all.” Limited perception forces people to see only the transient present, failing to recognize Krishna’s eternal and unchanging nature. He knows all beings — past, present, and future — but no one comprehends Him fully. This limitation arises from the dualities and delusions inherent in human perception.

Why, then, should we honor the forces of nature and their limited influence? Instead, we should seek to know God. By aligning our wisdom with His omniscience, expressed in His faith and principles, we peel away the layers of Maaya. This revelation unveils the true nature of existence. Limiting our perception of Him does not restrict His omniscience, which transcends past and future. Krishna illustrates this by revealing His knowledge of all beings, regardless of time.

To know God fully, we must unite with Him, moving beyond individualized worship of other forms. We cannot know Him from a distance or through reason and abstraction. The delusion of material creation veils His Divine Maaya, distorting His unmanifest and transcendent nature. This distortion prevents us from achieving true union and gaining His wisdom.

Krishna, omniscient of past, present and future, declares that no one fully knows Him. The wisdom lies in understanding that finite perception veils His true nature. Despite evolving wisdom through life experiences, the inherent limitations and confusion persist. Recognizing this, Krishna emphasizes the need for guidance beyond personal wisdom. We must honor Him with resolve to overcome the delusions and dualities of the finite present.

In our journey towards greater spiritual and material wellbeing, we inherently believe in the principle of increase. This belief guides our actions, rooted in faith and wisdom. Krishna's omniscient nature provides a beacon, urging us to transcend the limitations of our perception and embrace His eternal, unchanging essence. Through this transcendence, we move closer to understanding and aligning with the divine omniscience that governs all existence.

7.24. Not knowing my transcendent nature, the unwise see Me as manifest, unaware of My higher unmanifest nature which is imperishable and unsurpassed.

Lord Krishna's Divine nature is transcendent, eternal and unsurpassed in its wisdom. However, those who have yet to finalize wisdom (7.30) perceive only through the restrictions of the five senses and bounded mind (previous verse). Consequently, they perceive the unmanifest and eternal as manifest, transitory and ordinary; they fail to see My transcendent nature in My non-transcendent eightfold order (7.04 - 7.05). Deluded by the Maaya of material creation in the finite present (7.14 - 7.15), God's Divine nature — '*Divine is this Maaya of mine*' (7.24) — appears manifest, whereas in its transcendent Reality it is '*unmanifest*,' '*imperishable*,' and '*unsurpassed*' in its wisdom to guide our actions.

Not knowing my transcendent nature, the unwise see Me as manifest, unaware of My higher unmanifest nature which is imperishable and unsurpassed. Being entirely concealed by Yoga-Maaya, I am not apparent to all; this deluded world does not recognize Me as unborn and unchanging (following verse).

7.25. Being entirely concealed by Yoga-Maaya, I am not apparent to all. This deluded world does not recognize Me as unborn and unchanging.

Even in God Consciousness Maaya's delusion persists. '*Yoga-Maaya*': we see God everywhere (6.32), but yet, the "everywhere" we see is itself manifest and perishable. We fail to see the unmanifest and imperishable in Divine Maaya itself, '*Divine is this Maaya of mine*' (7.24). Something is still missing in our perception of God, even in God Consciousness. In part, the novelty of seeing union (Yoga) everywhere in the relative field of life helps to

conceal His *'unborn and unchanging nature.'* So to speak, we have to get over it.

Krishna remains unmanifest in the manifest perception of Him. An Avatar of Vishnu seen in human form, His unmanifest nature is *'not apparent to all.'* Where mental limitations force perceiving in the space and time of the finite ever-changing present, *'This deluded world [of limited perception in the finite present] does not recognize Me as unborn and unchanging.'*

Lord Krishna reveals that His transcendent nature remains concealed by Yoga-Maaya. In the deluded world, He is perceived as manifest, and His unborn and unchanging essence goes unrecognized. Krishna asserts His knowledge of past, present, and future beings, yet no one comprehends Him fully; limited by dualities and delusions, individuals fail to grasp His unmanifest, eternal and imperishable nature (following verse).

7.26. I know the departed and the living beings and those yet to be. But no one knows Me fully.

Why bother with honoring forces of nature and gaining some measure of the *'honored form's'* restricted sphere of influence (7.20 - 7.23)? Instead, know God. Fuel your wisdom with His omniscience expressed in His faith, His principle of increase and His outcome. Honor Him and the layers of Maaya peel away. All is revealed.

Limiting our perception of Him does not restrict His omniscient perception, which is unbounded by past and future. To illustrate His unmanifest transcendent nature (7.05; previous verse), Krishna reveals Himself as unbounded by Maaya of material creation in the finite present. *'I know the departed and the living beings and those yet to be.'* That is, I am omniscient of past and future in the eternal present.

'But no one,' who remains individualized as *'one'* of lower self, who spins their wheels by worshipping other *'honored form[s],'* and who has yet to unite with Me, *'knows Me fully.'* We cannot know God from a distance or by reason and abstraction — or through *'honored forms.'* Surely, we cannot know God when veiled by His *'divine Maaya'* of material creation in the finite present. Those susceptible to *'Yoga-Maaya'* (previous verse) will necessarily distort His unmanifest and transcendent nature to the transient finite present, a distortion which short-circuits union, knowing Him fully and gaining His omniscient wisdom.

[Believing in oneself is omniscience. We see ourselves moving toward greater spiritual and material wellbeing, toward contentment and happiness. The details are fuzzy. But inherently, we believe we're heading toward increase. From belief in His principle of increase, Faith and Boon (7.20 – 7.22). Wisdom too, since belief in oneself guides actions.]

Krishna, with omniscient knowledge of past, present and future, declares that while He knows all living beings, departed souls, and those yet to be born, none fully know Him. Wisdom lies in understanding that finite perception veils His unmanifest, imperishable nature. Following verse: The inherent dualities of attraction and aversion plunge beings into confusion at birth. Despite evolving wisdom through life experiences, the inherent limitations and confusion persist. Recognizing this, Krishna emphasizes the need for guidance beyond personal wisdom and the importance of honoring Him with resolve.

Wisdom:

Overview:

“Wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.” — *Ecclesiastes*

From birth, all beings fall into confusion due to the dualities arising from attraction and aversion. Without God's omniscience, we stumble into sinful actions that hinder our spiritual and material wellbeing. Our senses, minds and intellects guide us toward greater wellbeing based on our experiences. We favor the attractive, which brings happiness, and avoid the aversive, which brings the opposite. Ideally, our attractive experiences outweigh the aversive ones, helping us evolve toward greater happiness and wellbeing.

Through intellectual understanding and the application of life's lessons, we modify our behavior. Over time, we become wiser. However, self-induced behavioral modification lacks the prescience needed to maintain a true course of evolution through new and challenging experiences. Despite our best efforts, we waste precious time floundering about.

God's omniscience, guiding our actions, lies beyond our natural ability to apply past lessons. Innocence leads us into confusion at birth, and we remain confused due to the incompleteness of lesson-based wisdom. Reasoning our course of action through attraction and aversion fails to account for long-term consequences. Achieving greater wellbeing based on reasoning alone is often a gamble. At best, we stumble and make mistakes; at worst, we fall into league with evildoers, lose balance of mind and stray from the path of evolution.

Those whose sinful acts end and whose actions are pure honor God with resolve. Our personal God knows what's best for our evolution. Acting in our belief and His Faith and principle of increase liberates us from the confusion of opposites. Following His guidance, we naturally make right choices and perform actions that support long-term evolution, halting sinful acts that retard evolution. Our actions become spontaneous — and steady faith dawns. In the groove, we instinctively feel grateful.

Honoring God with gratitude plants our feet firmly in the eternal present. Gratitude balances us on the path and liberates us from shallow wisdom based on dualities. Resolute gratitude purifies our actions to achieve God's

cosmic plan. Over time, gratitude deepens and strengthens, permeating all actions. The present, achieved in spontaneous gratitude, becomes eternal.

Those liberated from the confusion of opposites honor God with resolute gratitude. Their actions, guided by God's omniscient wisdom, end sinful behaviors and achieve purity. Taking refuge in God, they seek relief from old age and death, knowing God thoroughly in both the physical and celestial realms. They strive for perfection in action, incorporating Brahman, and ultimately seek liberation from rebirth.

Taking refuge in God by honoring Him with gratitude, we live in the eternal present. We achieve His omniscient wisdom in action through His Faith and principle of increase. Lesson-based wisdom guided by attraction and aversion loses purpose. We see everything, both His non-transcendent nature and His transcendent nature. By experiencing God everywhere, we know Brahman thoroughly and recognize our supreme Self. Through intellectual understanding and His guidance, we know His Divine nature pervades all action.

Those who know God as the governing principle of the physical and celestial realms, as well as the Lord of Sacrifice (of desire), understand Him even in the hour of death. They step up from the bondage of rebirth to liberation. Knowing our supreme Self, we understand God's governing principles of increase in evolution and love. By taking refuge in these principles and surrendering faith, desire and outcome to the Lord of Sacrifice, we gain God's omniscient wisdom to guide our actions to the highest levels of wellbeing.

In the act of death, guided by God's governing principle of increase, we see God at the top of the stairs. Our hearts open, and our love for Him permeates our consciousness. We step up to God's celestial realm and come to know Him completely, fulfilling the promise of this journey.

7.27. Due to dualities arising from attraction and aversion, all beings fall into confusion at birth.

Without God's omniscience (previous verse), we fall into sinful wrong actions that retard evolution in spiritual and material wellbeing (see right and wrong actions, 2.47).

From birth, our senses, minds, and intellects guide actions toward greater wellbeing based on attractive and aversive experiences. As a rule, we favor the attractive (say, owning gold) which renders happiness and avoid the aversive (say, snake bite) which renders unhappiness. Hopefully, attractive experiences outweigh aversive ones, and in our measured way, we evolve along our path to greater happiness and wellbeing.

Through intellectually understanding philosophy of action and applying it to life's lessons, we modify our behavior based on our attractive and aversive experiences. Gradually, we become wiser with age. But self-induced behavioral modification lacks prescience to hold actions on a true course of

evolution through new and challenging experiences. Despite our best efforts, we waste precious time floundering.

The full sweep of having God's omniscience guide actions lies beyond our ken and ability to self-apply naturally. Out of innocence, we '*fall into confusion at birth*' and to varying degrees, remain confused due to the incompleteness and fragility of lesson-based wisdom. In addition, reasoning our course of action through attraction and aversion fails to account for long-term consequences. [*'Unfathomable is the course of action'* (4.17).]

Achieving greater wellbeing, based on reasoning alone, is often a crashshoot. At best, we stumble along and screw things up from time-to-time; at worst, we fall into league with '*evil doers*' (7.15), lose balance of mind (2.48) and trip off the path of evolution.

In the transition from this verse on attraction and aversion, beings fall into confusion at birth. Following verse: The journey from sin to purity involves ending sinful acts, achieved through God's omniscient guidance. Liberated from the confusion of opposites, those purified in action honor God with resolute gratitude, aligning with His cosmic plan to enjoy the cosmos and achieving lasting wellbeing.

7.28. Those whose sinful acts end, whose actions are pure, liberated from the confusing power of opposites, honor Me with resolve.

Our personal God knows what's best for our evolution. God's omniscient wisdom, achieved by acting in our belief and in His Faith and principle of increase (7.20 – 7.22), '*ends*' lesson-based wisdom and liberates us '*from the confusing power of opposites.*' Following His guiding hand, naturally making right choices and performing actions that support evolution in the long-term, slams the brakes on '*sinful acts.*' Our actions go of their own accord. Steady faith dawns. In the groove, we spontaneously feel grateful.

Instinctively honoring God with gratitude — '*honor Me with resolve*' — plants our feet firmly in the eternal present. Gratitude balances us on the path and liberates us from shallow wisdom based on '*dualities arising from attraction and aversion*' (previous verse). Consequently, resolute gratitude purifies actions to achieve God's cosmic plan to '*come to Me*' (7.23) and once at His side, to know '*Me fully*' (7.26). Over time, gratitude deepens, strengthens, permeates all action, and establishes itself; the present achieved in spontaneous gratitude becomes eternal.

In transitioning from this to the final two verses, those liberated from the confusion of opposites honor God with resolute gratitude. Their actions, guided by God's omniscient wisdom, end sinful behaviors, achieving purity. Taking refuge in God, they seek relief from old age and death, knowing God thoroughly in both the physical and celestial realms they come to Him.

7.29. *Those who strive for relief from old age and death, having taken refuge in Me, know Brahman thoroughly, as well as the Self (Adhyaatma) and all action (karma).*

'Those who strive for relief from old age and death' refers to those who seek to know 'My transcendent nature, the Self' (7.05) in My non-transcendent eightfold order (7.04). They 'strive for perfection' in action to evolve to perfection by incorporating Brahman in their actions (3.15, 7.03) and ultimately, seek liberation from rebirth.

'Having taken refuge in Me' by honoring Me with gratitude, we live in the eternal present (previous verse). We achieve His omniscient wisdom in action through His Faith and His principle of increase (expressed as our desire, 7.20 – 7.23). Futile lesson-based wisdom guided by attraction and aversion loses purpose and falls by the wayside.

We see everything (His non-transcendent nature, 7.04) and that which constitutes everything (his 'transcendent nature,' 7.05 – 7.12). Being on the ground floor, as it were, we see nonaction in action and action in nonaction: by experiencing God everywhere, through all the senses, we 'know Brahman [Oneness, (4.18)] thoroughly'. We know our supreme 'Self (Adhyaatma)' as Krishna's 'transcendent nature, the Self' (7.05). Through intellectual understanding and recognizing His guidance in past and present experiences, we know His Divine nature pervades 'all action (karma)' (7.04).

7.30. *Those who know Me as governing principle of the physical realm (Adhibhuta) and simultaneously as governing principle of the celestial realm (Adhidaiva), as well as the Lord of Sacrifice, their minds know Me even in the hour of death.*

At long last, this final verse steps up from 'liberated from the bondage of rebirth' and 'go to the end of rebirth' (2.51, 5.17). But step up to where? 'Liberated' to what? What lies beyond the 'end of rebirth'?

We know our supreme Self (Adhyaatma), which underlies His non-transcendent and transcendent nature (previous verse). Consequently, we 'simultaneously' know God's governing principle of increase in evolution (7.11; and 'the man of wisdom,' 7.17 – 7.18) in His non-transcendent 'physical realm (Adhibhuta)' and the governing principle of love (7.12) in His transcendent 'celestial realm (Adhidaiva).' In belief we take refuge in these principles and surrender faith, desire and outcome to the 'Lord of Sacrifice' (7.20 – 7.23), gaining God's omniscient wisdom to guide our actions to the highest levels of wellbeing (7.24 – 7.26).

Knowing God's governing principle of increase in the 'physical realm' guides our wise actions, even in the act of death. Eyes uplifted in expectation, we see God at the top of the stairs. Our hearts open. Our love for Him permeates consciousness and expresses itself in experiencer, experiencing

and experienced. We step up to God's '*celestial realm*' and come to know Him completely. "Let us pass over the river and rest under the shade of the trees," Stonewall Jackson.

Conclusion:

Here we reflect on the insights and practices that have guided us to embody the divine principle of increase in our everyday lives. This concluding section encapsulates the essence of our exploration, offering a synthesis of the wisdom gleaned from ancient Vedic teachings and the practical applications within the *Bhagavad Gita*. It serves as both a summation and an invocation, encouraging us to carry forward the lessons learned into the fabric of our daily lives. Through this journey, we discovered that living divine increase is not an abstract concept but a tangible reality, accessible to all willing to align their desires and actions with the cosmic order of increase — all initiated by serving others' desires and innocently renouncing our own. As we conclude, we reflect on the transformative power of the divine principle of increase, not just as a philosophical ideal, but as a living truth that shapes our destiny and leads us toward a life of harmony, purpose and infinite abundance, that is a life that realizes and embodies order into the disorder of the entropic universe we live in.

Wisdom Guides Action to Divine Increase

... naturally and spontaneously so, always, and in personal ways.

Our journey through Cosmic Consciousness, Brahman Consciousness, and God Consciousness culminates in a synthesis of wisdom and action, fundamentally transforming how we navigate our dynamically active daily lives. This evolution in consciousness illuminates the path to inviting God's power to increase spiritual and material wellbeing into our daily lives, revealing that the key lies not in the pursuit of external achievements but in aligning our inner world with divine will.

From Cosmic to Brahman to God Consciousness:

Cosmic Consciousness lays the groundwork by expanding our awareness beyond the lower self bound to action, fostering a deep sense of connection with the entirety of creation through unbounded higher Self. Here, Nature's wisdom guides action to increase spiritual and material wellbeing. As we throw ourselves into action with the clear awareness of separation higher of Self from desire and action, we infuse our daily lives with deeper purpose and meaning, inviting the flow of God's grace into every moment.

Brahman Consciousness deepens this experience of Cosmic Consciousness by leading us to a deeper state of nonattachment and equanimity, where we

perform actions not for personal gain but as expressions of the creative process itself, Brahman. In Brahman Consciousness we see Oneness underlying all diversity; wisdom transcends personal desires, guiding actions that are in harmony with the universal laws of sacrifice and creation. This alignment with Brahman fosters liberation from desires, fear and anger. Here, calmness itself, separates us from desires and actions of lower self. Inner peace and orderliness prevail in all our endeavors.

In God Consciousness expanded vision over Brahman Consciousness creates a spiritual unity that transcends attachments, bondage to actions, and the cycle of impression-desire-action. Out of calmness born of Brahman Consciousness, higher Self spontaneously returns to higher Self when pulled away by active lower self. We see the higher Self in all beings and all beings in the higher Self. This expanded vision creates a spiritual unity that transcends attachments and fosters a harmonious relationship between seer and seen. We see God in everything. Wisdom born of God's omniscience guides action. Thus, actions performed in God Consciousness are imbued with a profound sense of love and devotion, making our daily lives a living prayer. This constant communion with the divine invites increase, not just in material abundance but in love, joy and spiritual insight born of intellectual understanding and direct experience.

Knowing God: Seeing God in everything unifies all creation. We transcend the delusion of Maaya of seeing only the perishable aspect of creation. We see the imperishable God in His perishable creation. Through belief in achieving outcomes that support spiritual and material wellbeing, we develop a personal relationship with God. His Faith, Desire and ordained Outcome become indistinguishable from our faith, desire and outcome achieved through action. We achieve wisdom: God's omniscience guides our actions to more orderly outcomes. Sinful acts end.

Inviting God's power of increase into our active daily lives is a natural consequence of living with evolving states of Cosmic, Brahman and God Consciousness.

Serving with Selflessness: Adopting a selfless attitude in service to others, thereby dissolving egoism and selfish desire, aligning ourselves with divine will. This selflessness invites the power of increase in spiritual and material wellbeing, as our actions become channels for God's grace of increase to flow into the world.

Acting with Spontaneous Nonattachment: Naturally performing every action with detachment from its fruits, trusting in the divine order. This spontaneous trust in action invites inner peace and contentment, reflecting the power of increase in the form of spiritual growth and inner harmony.

Spontaneously seeing the Divine in Every Moment: Experiencing that every action, no matter how trivial and mundane, connects with the divine. This perspective transforms our daily tasks into sacred rituals, attracting God's blessings, abundance and increase.

Embracing Love and Devotion: Letting love and devotion for God spontaneously guide our actions fills our lives with His divine presence. This natural devotion attracts an increase in divine qualities within us, enriching our lives with a deeper sense of purpose, fulfillment and increase in wellbeing.

In conclusion, wisdom — the profound understanding and experience that emerges in Cosmic, Brahman, and God Consciousness — serves as the guiding light for our desires and actions to spontaneously achieve spiritual and material wellbeing, ensuring harmonious actions with divine will. By embodying this wisdom in our active daily lives, we naturally invite God's power of increase, experiencing an abundance of peace, joy and love that advances our spiritual and material lives, enriching every dimension of our existence.

Order: Realization and Embodiment through Divine Increase

Building upon the foundational insights from the previous section of Conclusions, where we delved into the essence of wisdom as a guiding light towards divine increase, this section illuminates the practical aspects of realization and embodiment. As we transition, our focus shifts from the abstract understanding of divine principles to their tangible manifestation in the fabric of our daily lives. This section endeavors to bridge the gap between knowledge and action, emphasizing that true wisdom is not merely an accumulation of insights but a living, breathing practice that weaves through our interactions, decisions and pathways to growth. Here we underscore the journey from cognitive recognition of divine truths to their active realization within the physical realm, highlighting that the ultimate test of wisdom lies in its application to action. By aligning our actions with the principles of divine increase, we not only elevate our own existence but also contribute to the collective harmony and prosperity of the world around us, embodying the highest ideals in every step we take to realize and embody order in our daily lives.

Evolution in consciousness marks the journey towards divine realization and embodying order in daily life: Cosmic Consciousness, Brahman Consciousness, God Consciousness, and ultimately Knowing God. Each

level offers a unique perspective on order, guided by wisdom that informs action.

In Cosmic Consciousness, we see an intrinsic separation between our higher Self and our desires and actions, leading to an acute awareness of an overarching, interconnected order that permeates all existence beyond our individual selves. This realization propels us towards acts of selfless service, seamlessly aligning our actions with cosmic order. We see life's unfolding from a detached perspective, recognizing an inherent order guiding both spiritual and material wellbeing. Liberated from the pursuit of material happiness, we discover true joy emanating from within, affirming our harmonious and orderly connection with universal order.

In Brahman Consciousness, we deepen our natural detachment from personal desires, immersing ourselves in the universal order on the level of Brahman, the source of all action that does not act. Brahman Consciousness enhances our spiritual wellbeing, marked by a profound calmness and peace, fostering a sense of unity with all of creation. We see Brahman's Oneness in all, cultivating a deep familiarity and an appreciation for the intrinsic orderliness amid life's diversity. Brahman Consciousness nurtures a deep, self-sustaining peace and happiness; calmness enables us to remain poised amidst the physical realm's chaos.

In God Consciousness, we see God everywhere and intimately encounter His divine presence in all aspects of life, instilling a profound sense of order. Our actions become synergistic co-creations with the divine, enhancing our spiritual fulfillment. God Consciousness allows us to see divinity in every facet of creation, thereby experiencing a universal order. We resonate deeply with creation's purpose, aligning with it and finding fulfillment in the fundamental act of co-creating. This alignment brings us into harmony with the universe's intrinsic order, enriching our lives with purpose and meaning.

In knowing God, we integrate divine order deeply into every facet of our existence, marrying wisdom with action in pursuit of divine purpose. We transcend Maaya, see the imperishable God within His perishable creation. Our faith, desires and outcomes become indistinguishable from God's will, ordaining every action with divine order and wisdom. This unity with God's orchestrates a harmonious dance of grace, ending sinful acts and enabling us to live in joyful harmony with all creation, fully aligned with divine order.

This journey is accessible and grounded in daily life, encouraging us to apply and enjoy these experiences in our ever-evolving consciousness and live in harmony with divine order. By serving others selflessly, we align our actions

with divine will, transforming our lives and the world around us with the boundless love and generosity of God. This transformative path is not only a means to higher consciousness but a practical way to bring divine order and abundance into every moment of our existence, inspiring us to take action towards personal growth and transformation.

Gratitude: The Keystone of Presence and Divine Harmony

“Behold! The clear religion of heaven.” — John Keats

In crafting this final section on "gratitude" as a segue from the established themes of *Divine Ascension*, we draw upon the insights of the preceding sections which explored the intricate relationship between consciousness, divine principles and the embodiment of order in daily life. Through this journey, we've ventured from understanding the cosmic order and harmonizing the cognitive and physical realms to spontaneously embodying divine principles in our daily actions — and actually seeing the omnipresence of the divine in the minutiae of life.

As we transition from the tapestry of insights laid out in the preceding sections, it becomes clear that the practice of gratitude stands as a keystone in the archway leading to a life imbued with presence, divine harmony and an unshakeable peace and calmness that transcends the ephemeral nature of the physical realm. Gratitude, in its essence, is the heartfelt acknowledgment of the infinite abundance that permeates our existence, a gentle reminder that beneath the apparent chaos of the material world lies an underlying order, a personalized cosmic symphony orchestrated by the divine.

Gratitude as a Portal to the Present:

Express gratitude and instantly transport yourself to the present. Instantly, *Be Here Now*, Ram Dass. Guaranteed!

Gratitude acts not merely as an emotion or a response but as a portal — a transformative gateway that aligns our being with the vibrational frequency of the divine. By expressing gratitude, we attune our hearts to the melody of the universe, recognizing the divine interplay in every moment, every breath and every experience. This recognition awakens us to the beauty of the present, the eternal now, where the divine dance of creation unfolds.

Living Divine Increase Through Gratitude:

The journey through Cosmic Consciousness to the realization of God's infinite abundance reveals that the practice of gratitude is both a path and a destination. As we embody gratitude, we become living vessels of divine increase, channels through which the cosmic order manifests in the world of form. This divine principle of increase, reflected in our capacity for gratitude, transforms our perception of the material realm. We see the physical not as a domain of entropy and chaos but as a canvas of divine expression, a sacred

ground where every act, no matter how small, is imbued with cosmic significance.

The Alchemy of Gratitude:

Gratitude is the alchemy that transmutes the base metals of our daily struggles and challenges into the gold of divine wisdom and joy. It shows us that true abundance is not found in the accumulation of material wealth or successes but in the richness of our inner life, the depth of our connections with others and our ability to see the divine in all things. In gratitude, we find the strength to serve others selflessly, recognizing that in serving we are not depleting ourselves but tapping into the infinite wellspring of divine love and abundance.

A Symphony of Gratitude:

As we conclude this journey of *Divine Ascension*, we step into a symphony of gratitude, a life where every moment is an opportunity to witness the divine, to live in the present, and to participate in the cosmic dance with a heart full of gratitude. Life is challenging: this symphony does not deny the complexity and challenges of the physical realm but embraces them as essential notes in the divine composition. In gratitude, we find the peace that surpasses all understanding, a peace that is not an escape from the world but a profound engagement with it, through the eyes of the divine.

In gratitude, we realize that we are not mere observers of the cosmic order but active participants in its unfolding, co-creators with the divine in the sacred art of living. Carry forward the torch of gratitude, illuminating the path for ourselves and for others, as we walk with the divine, in an ever-deepening dance of Cosmic Consciousness and divine increase.

Redefining the Practice of Karma Yoga

In *Divine Ascension*, we embarked on a profound exploration of the *Bhagavad Gita*, seeking to unlock the deeper dimensions of Karma Yoga beyond the conventional understanding of restraint, resistance and indifference to outcomes. Our journey has not been about adhering to the path most traveled but venturing into the vibrant essence of serving others, thereby transforming our own desires and actions.

Divine Ascension promised a redefinition of Karma Yoga, and through our discussions, commentaries and reflections on the sacred text, I believe we have fulfilled this promise. By positioning selfless service at the heart of Karma Yoga, we've uncovered a dynamic, life-affirming approach that celebrates active engagement with the world as the true path to spiritual growth and fulfillment.

We've seen how Karma Yoga, understood through the lens of *Divine Ascension*, diverges from the notion of suppressing desires and actions. Instead, it champions an active surrender to the service of others, where personal desires and actions are naturally renounced, not through forceful resistance and restraint, but through the joy of contributing to the welfare of others. This perspective illuminates the *Gita's* teachings as a call to vibrant living, where each action is a thread in the fabric of a universally connected consciousness.

Our reinterpretation of Karma Yoga does not diminish the value of meditation or discipline but places these practices in the context of a larger, more encompassing field of action. It asserts that right action flows naturally from a state of selfless service, aligning with Krishna's teachings that the course of action is unfathomable and transcends conventional moral binaries of right and wrong.

As we conclude our journey through *Divine Ascension*, we reflect on the transformation within ourselves and our readers. The practice of Karma Yoga, as redefined in these pages, calls for a radical openness to life's infinite possibilities, an embrace of our interconnectedness and a commitment to act from a place of deep, selfless love.

This redefinition challenges us to live not on the periphery of our spiritual potential but to dive straight into the heart of divine service, where we transcend egoism, and the soul finds its true expression in the service of others. Herein lies the essence of Karma Yoga, reimagined: a path that leads us to experience God's infinite abundance through the act of giving,

transforming our actions into offerings of love, and our lives into a testament to the unbounded potential of the human spirit.

In redefining Karma Yoga, *Divine Ascension* invites us to embody a spirituality that is active, engaged, and wholeheartedly committed to the upliftment of all beings. It is a call to action that resonates with the core of our being, urging us to live our truths boldly and to serve with a heart wide open to the divine increase that awaits us all.

Karma Yoga and the Path to Highest Consciousness

In *Divine Ascension*, our exploration of the *Bhagavad Gita* transcends traditional interpretations of Karma Yoga, inviting us into a vibrant dialogue with our deepest spiritual aspirations. This journey has not only redefined Karma Yoga as the path of selfless service but has also illuminated the stages of Cosmic, Brahman and God Consciousness, offering a comprehensive roadmap for spiritual evolution.

Our reinterpretation of Karma Yoga emphasizes active engagement in the world through serving others' desires, a practice that naturally leads to the renunciation of our own desires. This selfless service is the gateway to Cosmic Consciousness, where we begin to perceive the unity of all life, experiencing a profound sense of interconnectedness and oneness with the cosmos. In this state, the distinction between the self and the other dissolves, ushering in a profound peace and a deeper understanding of our place in the universe.

As we deepen our practice, we transition into Brahman Consciousness, marking a pivotal shift in our spiritual journey. Here, the realization deepens that the Self is not just interconnected with all of existence but is, in essence, the same as the ultimate reality, Brahman. This state of consciousness brings about a liberation from the illusions of separateness, ego and individuality, offering a taste of the infinite and eternal nature of our true Self. The benefits of achieving Brahman Consciousness include an unshakeable inner peace, unwavering equanimity in the face of life's dualities, and a boundless compassion for all beings.

The journey culminates in God Consciousness, a stage where the divine is seen and experienced in all aspects of creation. This consciousness brings the realization that the divine essence permeates everything, and our actions become a form of worship, a loving service to the divine present in every moment and every thing. The experience of God Consciousness enriches our lives with profound joy, love and a deep sense of purpose. It transforms our perception of the world, allowing us to see the sacred in the mundane and to live our lives as a testament to the divine.

Divine Ascension has promised and delivered a radical redefinition of Karma Yoga, situating it as the practice of selfless service that opens the path to Cosmic, Brahman and God Consciousness. The journey through these states of awareness not only elevates our spiritual practice but also transforms our very being, imbuing our lives with a deeper meaning, joy and a palpable connection to the divine.

This reimagined path of Karma Yoga challenges us to live fully, to serve selflessly and to embrace our divine potential. It invites us into a living relationship with the infinite, where every act of service is an act of love and every moment is an opportunity to realize our unity with the cosmos, the ultimate reality, and the divine essence that animates all of life.

Through the practice of Karma Yoga as explored in *Divine Ascension*, we embark on a transformative spiritual journey, unlocking the doors to higher states of consciousness and reaping the profound benefits of spiritual awakening. It is a call to action, a call to love, and, ultimately, a call to awaken to our true, divine nature.

Table 1: States of Consciousness in a Nutshell

Principle criteria for seven states of consciousness.

Sleep Consciousness: Unaware.

Dream Consciousness: Subjective awareness of memory during sleep.

Waking Consciousness: Actions overshadow awareness of transcendent higher Self.

Transcendental Consciousness: The experience of steady intellect achieved when selflessly serving others' desires.

Cosmic Consciousness: Intellect established in the Self, we experience contented higher Self during sleeping, dreaming and diverse activities of waking state consciousness. Guided by Nature, desires and actions flow of their own accord.

Brahman Consciousness: Calmness separates higher Self from activity of lower self. Inner peace.

God Consciousness: Achieved through calmness, happiness abiding in the heart dissolves separation between higher Self and activity. We see God everywhere. Love for God pervades feelings, thoughts and actions.

About the Author

“God writes straight with crooked lines.” — *Saint Teresa of Avila*

Once upon a time I lived in northern Maine and picked potatoes. My brother and sister picked potatoes. All able bodies living north of the Nine-Mile Woods — other school-age kids, the shabby indigent, the scruffy unemployed, housewives assisted by toddlers — picked potatoes too.

We'd arrive in early-morning darkness to a frost-covered field to the sound of the tractor firing up. Farmers paid us 20 cents a barrel. On a good day, I picked 25 barrels. Most pickers were more ambitious. With earnings, we bought winter clothing to tilt into blowing snow at sub-freezing temperatures.

One day, I stood from stoop labor and looked across the field to the small pond bordering it. On the far side, a Great Blue Heron fed among tall reeds.

The veil lifted. Unifying effulgence backlit everything: the sky, the pond, the unpicked potatoes, the sound of the tractor, the scent of loamy earth. I saw Oneness in all. I felt familiar with all. I knew all. More importantly, I felt inner happiness. Instinctively, I knew sharing my experience with others would only diminish it.

We can argue about my experience of knowing all. But I knew one thing for certain. I didn't see a future in picking potatoes.

I joined the Army. With the draft breathing down my neck, it was a natural enough move. My life began.

Unknowingly, it was a step in the direction of spiritual and material evolution. My eyes opened to the value of service in a wider world. I had three experiences that revealed my life's koan and started a 50-year quest to solve it.

First, following orders liberated me from selfish individuality. Well, at least for some of the time, anyway. Serving others innocently detached me from petty concerns about transgression, beer money, The Girls, training cycles, fears, and my uncertain future.

Of course, I fought these feelings of liberation. ‘*This is not the way it's supposed to be!*’ But undeniably, there it was, a sense of inner peace and familiarity amidst the dull-set patterns of disciplined olive-drab life and moils of rough-and-tumble Special Forces training. There were shades of the Great Blue Herron.

Second, in Vietnam, I served on an A-Team in The Valley of Death. The soul of an A-Team is trust. Trust engenders sacrifice and sacrifice is service on steroids. Elevated above the fray, I detached from strong emotions. Instinctive, selfless actions shoved fear to the back burner. Service on steroids, indeed. War lopped off the head of self-importance. Humbled. Reincarnated. Emancipated.

Third: Getting out I felt stronger in all ways. I believed in myself. Undeniably, a fragile happiness permeated life. Fragile indeed, but there it was. An invisible hand helped me navigate life. I flowed along more than stumbled. True enough, life wasn't a bed of roses. I carried baggage. But somehow, my past made perfect sense and I looked forward. I took my own path. The Great Blue strode ahead on long legs.

In time, scattered thoughts about moving with the flow clarified into a koan. *'In serving the desires of others, how have I found upliftment and strength?'* I know, my koan was not as flashy as "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

But my koan was personal. It had momentum and held my attention in quiet, inner ways. The koan was always there, lurking in my subconscious. It popped into thought at odd times: on redeyes from Frankfurt to Sao Paulo, slapping mosquitoes in Cameroon, reading a one-course menu in a Michelin starred restaurant, watching my bush plane's shadow drift across frozen and dusty corners of the world.

My 'aha' moment. Seeing the forest for the trees. Literally.

Fifty-plus years on, the answer popped into my head out of the dome of California's Tiepolo sky. Drying the breakfast dishes, I idly surveyed the intersection where the golden oak savannah of my meadow merged into the dark greens of Douglas firs and redwoods, puzzling about a verse on bondage to action in the *Bhagavad Gita*, a constant companion since my days in Vietnam.

The scales fell from my eyes. Clarity backlit everything. I beamed back.

But being the analytical type, it didn't take long to wonder, *'Was I correct?'*

The intuitive 'Yes' came instantly. Like slipping into the warm protected waters of my private lagoon, it just felt right.

The evidentiary 'Yes' lay in deeper waters. From years of practicing science, I knew what felt right was not necessarily so. Pearls of wisdom had morphed into plastic baubles upon deeper examination before.

Thing is, I just couldn't avoid the nagging question, '*Does my answer meet scriptural authority?*' Naturally, I thought about the *Bhagavad Gita* and then, the daunting task of plumbing its deeper depths. '*Hey, why go there?*'

Regardless, I pinched off my nostrils and jumped in. Damn the deeper waters. I went my own way. I took the *Gita* one word at a time. I sifted through multiple word meanings, learned to appreciate context and easily dismissed the drone of repetitive, less than insightful copycat commentaries.

Fitting my understanding and experience into the metaphor and narrative of Krishna's teachings took time, mountain ranges of patience, introspection, solitude, and most importantly, wings of faith.

The Great Blue Herron lifted me to new heights. My horizons expanded. Below, fields of potatoes bordered by ponds and streams and forest unending. To the west, the bulge of Appalachians, farther west snowcapped peaks of Rockies and High Sierras. Ahead, the boundless Pacific and other shore. Climbing through cruise altitude, I share the Supreme Secret of this ancient Yoga of action with you.

In affirmation, magic.

Keith R Parker, Angel Fire, New Mexico

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Cosmic Consciousness: quiet and content deep within, we witness desires on the surface of the mind and the organs of action act. ([2.72](#)), *'still the self by the Self alone'* ([3.43](#)), all actions in Cosmic Consciousness increase knowledge ([4.33](#)), individual unites with universal ([5.25](#))

Cycle (of impression-desire-action): *defined* ([2.39](#)), broken ([2.45](#))

Delusion: a steadfast intellect, untangled from delusion, transcends Vedic teachings ([2.51](#)), *'when your intellect crosses the thicket of delusion'* ([2.52](#)), *'from anger arises delusion; from delusion loss of memory'* ([2.63](#)), Krishna asserts that Cosmic Consciousness, brings freedom from delusion ([2.71](#)), *'freed from delusion and established in this [inner peace]'* ([2.72](#)), he who wastes precious time on restraint and dwelling on objects of the senses is delusional ([3.06](#)), *'those deluded by the Gunas of Nature are bound to the actions of the Gunas'* ([3.29](#)), *'knowing this [seeing Brahman's Oneness], you will never again fall into delusion'* ([4.35](#)), this delusion obscures independence from actions and the trilogy of experience ([5.15](#)), *'only those who resort to My refuge, transcend this veil of delusion [of Maaya]* ([7.14](#)), clarity of vision overtakes 'Maaya' and transcends delusion ([7.19](#)), Even in God Consciousness Maaya's delusion persists ([7.25](#))

Desire: follow Nature's desire ([2.51](#)), that desire covers this desire ([3.38](#)), flame of desire veils wisdom ([3.39](#)), outsource desire to Nature ([3.39](#)), senses, mind, and intellect are desire's domain ([3.40](#)), subdue through Self-control ([3.41](#)), cooler heads prevail ([3.43](#))

Dharma: dharma is the omnipresent magnetic field of evolution flowing through us ([2.40](#)), align all actions with dharma ([2.50](#)), push against the flow of dharma ([3.33](#)), one's own dharma ([3.35](#)), restoring societal dharma ([4.03](#)),

when dharma falls into decay ([4.07](#)), reestablish dharma by sacrificing desire through selfless acts to serve others' desires ([4.08](#))

Discipline and Maintenance: Moderation in recreation, action, sleeping and waking, clears the decks for Self-referral ([6.16 – 6.17](#)), self established in Self he is free from craving pleasure ([6.18](#)), God Consciousness can be gained through proper means by those who endeavor ([6.36](#))

DNA: sacrifice of desire is in our DNA ([3.10](#)), serving others' desire is in our DNA ([3.33](#)), performing duty is in your DNA ([3.35](#))

Dualities: liberated from life's dualities of success and failure, pleasure and pain, right and wrong, ups and downs... ([2.45](#)), trapped on the rollercoaster of life's dualities ([2.49](#)), transcend dualities ([4.22](#)), indifferent to life's dualities ([5.02](#)), living natural coolness to dualities ([5.03](#)), remain steady in extreme dualities ([6.07](#)), frees the mind from dualities ([6.11](#)), limited by dualities and delusion ([7.25](#)), dualities arising from attraction and aversion ([7.27](#))

Duty: householder's path ([3.08](#)), the highest order of action is duty ([3.23](#), [3.24](#)), follow Krishna's teaching of duty ([3.31](#)), the duty of another brings danger ([3.35](#)), how to attenuate anger through duty ([3.37](#))

Dweller in the body: the individualized nature of the Self ([2.45](#)), deluding the dweller in the body ([3.40](#)), enlightened dweller in the body ([5.12](#)), the dweller in the body rests in happiness ([5.13](#)), let him bring it back under the sway of the Self ([6.26](#))

Ego : the intellects finest quality to discern who you really are ([2.39](#)), we innocently abandon egoism and the sense '*I am the doer.*' ([3.27](#))

God Consciousness: see all beings present in the Self ([6.29](#)), see all things in Me ([6.30](#)), honor Me abiding in all beings ([6.31](#)), God Consciousness: see everything with an even vision of seeing God everywhere ([6.32](#))

God: the Supreme God obviates the roles other gods play (footnote, [3.11](#)), know God through the Avatar of these verses ([7.01](#)), of thousands of men, few strive to know God ([7.03](#)), know God's perishable non-transcendent nature ([7.04](#)), know God's imperishable transcendent nature ([7.05 – 7.12](#)), Maaya: weaker perishable overpowers stronger imperishable ([7.13](#)), simultaneously see perishable and imperishable ([7.14](#)), the distressed, seekers of knowledge, seekers of wealth, and the man of wisdom honor God ([7.16 – 7.19](#)), Personal God bestows your faith, your desire and your outcome ([7.20 - 7.23](#)), God's omniscience drives His wisdom ([7.24 – 7.26](#)), God's wisdom guides action through his principles of increase and love ([7.30](#)).

gods: we nourish each other (3.11), gods bestow enjoyments (3.12), gods achieve worldly goals (4.12), the Supreme God ordains faith, desire and outcome, obviating the roles other gods play (3.11), resort to other gods (7.20), to the gods the god worshipers go (7.23)

Gratitude: gratitude naturally directs attention to the present (3.11), through gratitude, we nourish the gods and the gods nourish us (3.11), offerings of gratitude win in a knockout punch (3.12), out of 'rain,' nourishment of gratitude to sustain the gods (3.14), the refined quality of gratitude draws attention inwards to refined levels of awareness (4.25), seeing gets real and through your heart you honor Him with spontaneous gratitude and love (6.31), fueled by gratitude and requiring Vishnu's participation as well (6.35), defeat entropy by living in the present of gratitude (6.36), gratitude that enhances and smooths the journey to greater wellbeing (7.01), spontaneous gratitude to God transcends the space-time delusion of 'Maaya' (7.16), gratitude confirms belief in God (7.23), gratitude to God is superlative and transcends the delusion of all finite and relative (7.23), those purified in action honor God with resolute gratitude (7.27), instinctively honoring God with gratitude plants our feet firmly in the eternal present (7.28)

Gunas of Nature: defined (2.45), drive everyone to action (3.05), perform all actions (3.27), Gunas act upon Gunas (3.28), deluded by (3.29), eternal non-doer (4.13)

Happiness: *'for one lacking peace of mind, can there be happiness?'* (2.66), for those lacking peace of mind, happiness depends on achieving this very desire (2.70), *'the dweller in the body rests in happiness'* (5.13), those who attain Brahman attain lasting happiness (6.28)

Intellect: the intellect discerns real and true actions for evolving in spiritual and material wellbeing (2.39), resolute intellect: points us along our dharmic path to higher spiritual and material wellbeing (2.41, 2.44), seek refuge in the intellect (2.49), during acts of selfless service, intellect steadies (2.55), intellect becomes established when we permanently identify with unbounded, desireless, nonactive, and Absolute higher Self (2.57 – 2.59, 2.68)

Karma Yoga (the practice): achieve union of lower self within higher Self (Yoga) through action (Karma) (2.39), serve others' desires, innocently renounce your own: live free from desires and uninvolved in actions desires seed (2.45), resisting desires and restraining from action, as in the canonical practice of Karma Yoga, begone (2.45), *'the Yoga of action [Karma Yoga] is superior to renunciation of action'* (5.02)

Knowledge: *'the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes'* (4.19), *'sacrifice of knowledge is superior to sacrifice through material means,'*

(4.33), see Brahman's Oneness in all, feel familiar with all, know all (4.33), 'you will cross over all sinfulness by the boat of knowledge alone' (4.36), 'the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes' (4.37), 'he who is perfected in Yoga, in time, finds that knowledge in the Self' (4.38), 'he who is possessed of faith gains knowledge' (4.39 – 4.40), 'swing the sword of knowledge and cut away this doubt born of ignorance which abides in the heart' (4.42)

Liberation (from bondage to action): power of selfless service and aligning actions with the eternal Self for liberation (2.39), the power of liberation far exceeds any effort expended to achieve it (2.40), "Liberation while still alive in the physical body" — Shankara (2.45), unboundedness and liberation from action, the goal set by Krishna in 2.39 (2.45), from right actions, the uplifting feeling of liberation fuels us forward through thick and thin (2.47), achieve liberation by separating higher Self from Nature's desires and the actions of lower self (2.51), liberation 'from delusion' of looking "out there" for happiness in objects of the senses (2.72), to sacrifice desire is to experience liberation from action and the flow of dharma (3.08), the remainder of sacrifice is liberation (3.13), find liberation from the bondage to action on the path of Karma Yoga (3.30), divine duty leads to liberation for those who grasp the truth (4.08), know all sacrifice to be born of action; knowing this you will find liberation (4.32)

Maaya: God's inferior perishable nature deludes us from seeing His superior imperishable nature (7.13), since the gunas are in God and since the gunas also comprise Maaya, 'Divine is this Maaya of Mine.' (7.14) Maaya begone: in God Consciousness, we see the perishable in the imperishable (7.14)

Nature: desire, intent, wisdom (2.51), act on Nature's desires (3.25).

Path: contemplation or action (3.03 – 3.04), Gyan Yogi or Karma Yogi (3.05), Samkhya or Yoga of action (5.01 – 5.05), even in one who has lost their way (5.18), Sanyasi or Yogi (6.01 – 6.02), act uprightly and engaging in right action (6.40 – 6.45) be a Yogi (6.46), his inner Self merges into Me (6.47)

Peace: inner peace (2.64 – 2.65, 2.71), peace of mind (2.66, 2.70, 2.72), in Brahman he attains inner peace (5.12), in Brahman Consciousness he attains peace (5.29)

Perfection: infuse Brahman's primal creativity to support evolution into all your actions (3.20)

Restraint: restraining the organs of action (3.06), what will restraint accomplish (3.33).

Sacrifice (of desire): an action unto itself (3.09), brought into being by action (3.14), Brahman is eternally established in sacrifice (3.15), follow the wheel

set revolving ([3.16](#), [3.19](#), [3.20](#)), enjoy the nectar of sacrifice ([4.31](#)), born of action ([4.32](#)), submission, inquiry, service ([4.34](#))

Secret: the Supreme secret of this '*imperishable Yoga*' hides in the only place you would never think to look ([4.03](#))

Self-referral: calm Self refers Self to Self ([6.10](#)), process of Self-referral: mind-body, attention, Self-awareness, submission, liberation ([6.11 – 6.15](#)), moderation in recreation, action, sleeping, and waking clears the decks for Self-referral ([6.16 – 6.17](#)), mind-body: controlling the multitude of senses with the mind ([6.24](#)), attention: gradually he should come to rest through the intellect ([6.25](#)), Self-awareness: bring it back under the sway of the Self alone ([6.26](#)), submission: go with the flow ([6.27](#)), liberation: attain lasting happiness ([6.28](#))

Self: lower and higher ([2.39](#)), attraction and aversion carry away the mind ([3.34](#)), still the self by the Self alone ([3.43](#)), beyond intellect ([3.43](#)), see Self in all beings ([4.35](#)), universality of Self controls individuality of self ([5.07](#)), their Selves fixed in That ([5.17](#)), Self united with Brahman ([5.21](#)).

Shankara: "This [realizing one's Self] happens by selflessly being good to others." ([2.45](#))

Skill in action: active lower self united in Absolute higher Self, perform spontaneous, smooth and effective right actions to further evolution ([2.50](#))

Trilogy of experience: the experiencer, that experienced and the process of experiencing come into being out of pure consciousness. ([3.05](#)), only the process of experiencing can bring phenomenal reality into existence through the trilogy of experience ([7.04](#))

Vedas: defined ([2.42](#)), of no more value ([2.46](#)), indifference to ([2.52](#)), wisdom surpasses ([2.52](#)), disregard Vedic doctrine ([2.53](#))

Wisdom: in selfless action of Cosmic Consciousness Nature's wisdom guides action ([2.51](#)), '*the wise inspire others to act likewise*' ([3.26](#)), '*this wisdom of indifference is veiled by ignorance.*' ([5.15](#)), God's wisdom guides action through His principles of increase and love ([7.30](#)).

Yoga (union): active lower self united in Absolute higher Self ([2.39](#)), Yoga realized: we achieve union of bounded outer activity (lower self) within the unbounded nature of contentment (higher Self) ([2.45](#)), Yoga in Brahman Consciousness: mind established in Self, inner calmness, beholding Self by Self alone, lasting happiness, unmovable, undismayed ([6.18 – 6.23](#))